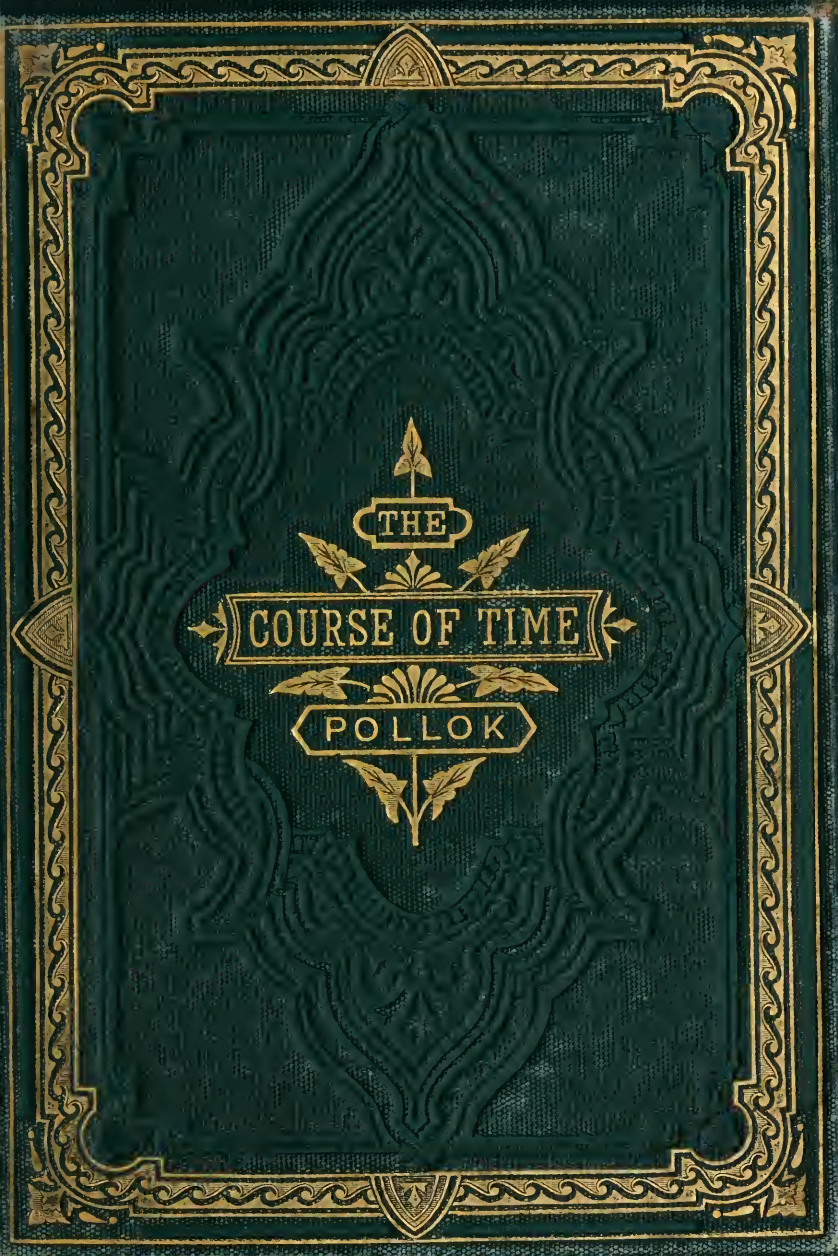




THE

COURSE OF TIME

POLLOK

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ИЗДАНИЕ
РЕДАКЦИОННОЕ
ТЕХНИЧЕСКОЕ
КАТЕГОРИЯ

THE COURSE OF TIME

Mr. H. Maylett

Aug. 31st 1840



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THE
COURSE OF TIME

A POEM

BY ROBERT POLLOK, A.M.

A NEW EDITION

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY BIRKET FOSTER, ETC.

AND

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M E M O I R.

ROBERT POLLOK, author of the *Course of Time*, was born on the 19th October 1798, at the little farm of Moorhouse, ten miles south of Glasgow. The Polloks had been farmers there for three generations. His mother was descended from a family which had shared deeply in the sufferings of the Covenanters between 1660 and 1688. Both his grandfathers and grandmothers became Seceders, when that separation from the Church of Scotland took place, and his parents belonged to the same religious sect. Robert was the second youngest of a family of eight children. His parents belonged to the class of small farmers, which in Scotland has sent forth so many worthy recruits to the better classes of society, and especially to the ranks of the clergy. As will be seen, they were able to give two of their sons a University education; but their circumstances, like those of their class, were narrow, compared with this generous and self-denying expenditure.

Robert learnt his letters at home, at his mother's knee. By her also he was taught to read the Bible, and, as is usual in God-fearing families in Scotland, was made to commit to memory the Shorter Catechism and part of the Psalms. It deserves to be recorded, as a proof of the influence of these maternal instructions, that in after years,

when speaking of the theological doctrines in his great Poem, he said, "It has my mother's divinity—the divinity that she taught me when I was a boy. I may have amplified it from what I learned afterwards; but in writing the poem, I always found that hers formed the groundwork, the point from which I set out. I always drew on hers first, and I never was at a loss." She did not live to see the triumph of her son, nor to bewail his death. The *Course of Time* was commenced seven months before her decease, which took place in the beginning of July 1825, but it was not completed till exactly a year after that date.

In his eighth year, Robert was sent to the parish-school of Mearns, at the manse of which parish Professor Wilson had not long before spent his boyhood. There he continued till his fifteenth year,—the instruction being confined to reading, writing, and arithmetic, with little or no grammar, and being often interrupted, especially in summer-time, when he was called away to take part in the work of the farm. He was diligent at his lessons; but when the tasks were over, no one joined more heartily than he in all field-games with his schoolfellows. Like the other farmers' sons of the neighbourhood, he was bred to agricultural work: he wrought at it occasionally from his childhood up to his fifteenth year, and then regularly for the next two years. In his seventeenth year he was induced to go to learn cabinetmaking with a brother-in-law, who was a cabinetmaker in a neighbouring village (Barrhead); but after making four chairs—which would now be prized as curiosities could they be identified, and if the poet's handiwork still holds together—he returned home, saying that "it would not do." The idea of giving up farming, and of studying for the ministry of the Gospel had, unknown to each other, been often in the thoughts of Robert and his brother next older than himself, David—his bedfellow and playfellow, and whom throughout life

he admitted to closer intimacy than all the rest; and in the autumn of this year (1815) becoming acquainted with each others' thoughts, they agreed to take togethler the long-contemplated step. Their parents appear to have given a ready assent; and for the next year and a half, Robert and his brother attended Fenwick school, to prepare for college—living the while with an uncle at Horsehill.

Robert Pollok had now attained his full stature. He was five feet nine inches in height; firmly and symmetrically made. His head was small and well formed,—the brow large,—the eyes black, keen, and full of power,—the complexion pale-brown, and the hair brown-black. In early boyhood, we are told, he was “white and ruddy”—a complexion which, when conjoined with black hair and eyes, is generally indicative of a constitution the reverse of robust,—but, having over-exerted himself one day at play, a pain arose in his chest and right side, and he became and continued ever after pale. The pain, though but slightly felt at first, and for a good while after scarcely felt at all, never quite left him; and in the summers of 1816 and 1817 the mowing of hay aggravated it, and caused him considerable distress.

In the November of 1817, having entered his twentieth year, he and his brother went to Glasgow to attend the University. There he studied diligently. He had set his heart upon a literary life, and he practised composition and other mental gymnasties with great steadiness of purpose. At the end of the third session, his health became impaired; and we find him writing to his brother as follows (June 1820), from beneath the paternal roof at Moorhouse:—“To be aiming at literature without adequate assistance is a hard task, but to be without stimulating health is harder still. I have not spoken of the state of my health to any person here; but the lowness of my spirits is no doubt visible. Dr Reid, the last time I saw him, recommended residing a month or two in Arran, and tak-

ing occasional sails. But to go there and be comfortable requires money, and you know that is not to be found. Were I even to get it here, I know so well their inability to assist me, that every shilling which I spend tortures my soul." He did not go to Arran, but took a sail to Dublin, where he remained a fortnight. Other two sessions completed his curriculum at college, when (March 1822) he took the degree of Master of Arts. Thereafter he entered upon the usual course of five years' study at the Glasgow Divinity Hall of the Secession Church, which did not terminate till the autumn of 1826. But much that is eventful happened before then.

During his long term of study, Robert Pollok each year spent the greater part of the summer and autumn with his family at Moorhouse—the scenery around which place is intimately associated alike with his life and his poetry. Notwithstanding its name, his father's farm contained no moors, being all either arable or meadow ground. But the view from it is extensive and magnificent,—bounded on the east and south, at a distance of from one to three miles, by various moorland heights; while from the west round to the north-east, the eye ranges over an expanse of from forty to eighty or ninety miles, bounded by a bold outline of mountains. From the moorland heights immediately to the south of Moorhouse, a magnificent panorama opens to the eye:—to the east Tinto and other hills towering aloft, with their heads often wrapped in mists; and to the south-east and south, a vast moor memorable for the meetings, and hallowed by the graves of martyrs to the Covenant. "From his boyhood," says his brother, "Robert frequented all the heights and hollows, springs, lakes, and streams, for several miles around. Scarcely was there a spot in the whole neighbourhood where his feet did not tread. One great source of his admiration was what is there called the North Hills—a magnificent range of Highland mountains, including Ben Cruachan,

Ben Lomond, Ben Venue, Ben Ledi, and Ben Voirlich,—presenting a front, as seen from Moorhouse, unsurpassed for boldness by anything in Scotland. These mountains, which were afterwards designated by him ‘Scotia’s northern battlement of hills,’ formed his favourite view; and often did he rise from writing at Moorhouse, and go out to a small elevation beside it, called the Head of the Close, and admire them in their varied appearances throughout the year. Nothing, however, delighted him so much as walking out alone, in a good day, without any definite purpose, into the moors that lie to the south and south-east of Moorhouse; wandering among them from height to height, or from glen to glen, till, as he expressed it, ‘his soul was filled with their glories.’ His favourite places of resort in these walks were the top of Balagich, and a great hollow about three miles to the south-east of it, towards Loudon Hill, called the Crook of the Lainsh, where the moors may be said to be in perfection,—stretching out on all sides as far as the eye can reach, and where scarcely a cultivated spot or any trace of man’s art is visible.” A reference to these moorland walks, and a conjoint description of these two places, occurs in the well-known passage in the fifth book of his Poem, commencing—

“Nor is the hour of lonely walk forgot.”

During his attendance at the University and at the Divinity Hall, Pollok was not distinguished from the other students by any peculiar prestige or success; although unquestionably a discerning observer, if admitted to intimacy with him, must have perceived the germs of an ardent and lofty intellect. “In speaking,” we are told, “he was not always prompt in expression. He had nothing of that sparkling cleverness which is sometimes as telling in debate as more substantial qualities. Occasionally he halted in a sentence, as if still

excogitating materials of reply, or as if he were consciously in possession of important principles to which he was unwilling to do injustice by an imperfect utterance of them." But these disadvantages were counterbalanced by the powerful grasp he took of his subject, and, when occasion called for it, by great earnestness and energy of manner; while his eye had a commanding power rarely met with, and his voice was an appropriate vehicle for the intenser emotions. He had no eccentricities, neither did he think he did God service by being morose or ascetic. Stern and simple enough was his mode of life for the most part,—for so his circumstances enjoined; but he never sought to separate himself from ordinary humanity by a narrow formalism. He was generally frank and affable; yet to those who were inquisitive or encroaching, especially if they were wealthy or literary persons, he was not only distant and reserved, but utterly inaccessible. Though of a nature essentially grave, thoughtful, and earnest, he was frequently, when in company—as is not seldom seen in such temperaments, on the principle of reaction—jocular and successful at banter; but it was said of him that there was "sense in his nonsense," and that great talent was required to talk it as he did. Like most young men brought up in the country, he could ride, drive, and handle a gun; nor did he feel any scruple, when an occasion required, to take the place of his brother John in the Renfrewshire yeomanry cavalry—where he showed himself "an excellent horseman, kept his place well in the ranks, and went through the sword-exercise with dexterity." He did not forswear the pipe, though, as he tells us, often remonstrated with on the subject by his lady friends. His youthful poems do not exhibit much individuality or vividness of emotion; nevertheless in them, and among his published letters, we see unmistakable traces of one who had a high place in his heart. Once we find him, too, in company of two college

friends, on one of their walking excursions, carving the initials of fair ones in a belt of fir-trees. "This piece of great affection finished," he says, "I proposed that we should next carve our own names, making obeisance to the fair ones; this I spoke from the heart, for they were dear valued letters to which I was to bow." The name of her who was so esteemed by the author of one of the greatest poems of his country, is not known to the public. Those fir-trees where the initials were carved, will now probably be sought for in vain; and even if they were found, Nature with her soft "effacing fingers" must long ago have drawn a veil over the secret.

From his boyhood Pollok was distinguished by great firmness, fearlessness, and decision of character,—qualities which at times stood him in good stead. When delivering his first discourse in the Divinity Hall, on the text, "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners," his over-poetical and in parts somewhat turgid strain, excited the disdainful smiles and laughter of the elder students; but Pollok went on cool and collected, until, coming to a sentence by no means unsuitable to the occasion, he leant over the pulpit, and said, fetching a sweep at the same time with his arm, and looking down in righteous wrath on the scoffing students—"Had sin not entered into the world, no idiot smile would have gathered on the face of folly to put out of countenance the man of worth!" After this, there were no more interruptions. Curiously enough, the first sermon which he preached as a licensed minister (in Dr Brown's Chapel, Edinburgh) was likewise attended by circumstances which put his firmness and self-possession to a severe test. "The first head of his discourse," says his brother, "he delivered with ease and readiness; but immediately after announcing the second head, he hesitated—paused momentarily—tried to go on—and stopped. For a moment he looked expressively to me, seated directly before him in the back-seat below; and I

can never forget his look. He tried once more to go on, and again stopped. He then made a decided stand in an attitude of determined recollection, as if he had been thinking over the discourse entirely alone ; and thus, after a short pause, during which he retained perfect self-possession, so that the audience never seemed to lose confidence in him, he recalled the sentence which had escaped him, and went on, from that to the end, calmly and collectedly as before." "Was there ever such self-possession !" said Dr Belfrage of Slateford, at the end of the service.

These are but the "outer edges" of Pollok's character ; for conduct is often a very imperfect exponent of the nature within. A man is ever greater than his works, though few there be that find him so. Many of the highest thoughts and noblest feelings pass between man and his own spirit ; their development in action being circumscribed by the external conditions of the individual's life. Pollok was one whose outer life gave but feeble token of the lofty treasures within. Wandering alone upon the moors, gazing on the glories of the far-reaching prospect, resting in sylvan glade or quiet nook, the Poet loved to "hold high converse with his soul," and dream of things solemn and sublime, which he was afterwards to embody in immortal verse. As he himself has said—

"It was, indeed, a wondrous sort of bliss
The lonely bard enjoyed, when forth he walked
Unpurposed ; stood, and knew not why ; sat down,
And knew not where ; arose, and knew not when ;
Had eyes, and saw not ; ears, and nothing heard ;
And sought—sought neither heaven nor earth—sought not,
Nor meant to think ; but ran, meantime, through vast
Of visionary things, fairer than aught
That was ; and saw the distant tops of thoughts,
Which men of common stature never saw,
Greater than aught that largest words could hold,
Or give idea of, to those who read."

Pollok early felt an aspiration to accomplish something worthy ; and this impulse soon became a fixed purpose, regulating his life. "I never envied my companions," says he, "nor even any of my contemporaries ; for I was daily bringing my soul to the trial of those standards of excellence which Time hath left standing behind him." But in his twenty-fourth year (1822) the consideration of circumstances forced itself upon him, and he began to ask himself, Where am I to live, and what am I to do for the future ? He says—"I began to think seriously how unreasonable it was to put my father to any more expenses ; and to feel how inadequate all that he could spare me was for maintaining me in that way—no extravagant one, as you know—in which I wished to live. He had already given me an education beyond his circumstances—for which, I trust, God shall reward him by me—and not only without ever saying, or seeming to think, that I was burdensome to him, but accompanying every farthing I received from him with a look of as much satisfaction and paternal sweetness, as I had put into his hand some gift of my filial affection. He never complained ; but he had given me the means of knowing my duty ; and every thought now began to be imbued, and every plan tried, by the need I was in of gaining something for myself. Poetry had been hitherto the darling of my soul ; and all my studies had been conducted, and my observations on the world made, with the design of accomplishing myself in that art, for which, I thought, nature had intended me. But I could not bear the idea of writing hastily, or of being forced to let anything out of my hands before I had made it as perfect as I could by time and pains."

In these circumstances, accident, and the need of realising money, led him to the composition of some short tales in prose—namely, "Helen of the Glen," "Ralph Gemmell," and "The Persecuted Family." The first of these was written in the summer of 1823, and the copyright of

it was soon after sold to Mr Collins, bookseller, Glasgow, for £15. In the autumn of the same year he received the offer of a school at Coupar-Angus. "I did debate whether or not to take the school," he says, "but my health, my inclination, and an ardent desire to attempt something, spoke loudly against it; and so I resolved, after a weary horrible struggle—for I knew I was leaning on a reed that had pierced a thousand sides—to trust for bread to the exertion of my pen. Success in teaching, at such a place as Coupar-Angus, would have been failure." Without loss of time, he set about preparing new subjects for his pen; and having commenced "*Ralph Gemmell*" and "*The Persecuted Family*," he paid a visit (Dec. 1823) to his brother David, then officiating at Auchindinny, near Edinburgh, and went to see Roslin and Penicuik House, the Pentland Hills, Habbie's How, and Rullion Green—places notable in the times of the Covenant. These tales were completed by the end of February, by which time we find illness hovering over him. "Health is happiness," we find him writing (Feb. 11), "at least I think it so. The pains still continue to hover about me. They weary my body, and they weary my mind; and in fact they so work, that the force of mind which should be sent abroad in the contemplation of natural and moral scenery, is almost at every moment attracted to the feebleness and worthlessness of myself." In the beginning of March this physical derangement culminated suddenly in a sharp but short attack of rheumatic fever, which seized him when in lodgings in Glasgow. On recovering, he wrote to his brother that "the fever had burned up the old constitution," and that a new and better one was forming; and before the end of the month we find him in Edinburgh endeavouring to dispose of his tales. This he found no easy matter, and he underwent much mortification in the attempt; but at length, in the following November, he sold the copyright of them to an Edinburgh bookseller for twenty

guineas. We may add that Pollok never owned the authorship of these tales, and was resolved never to own them.

The next year, 1824, was the gloomiest in Pollok's history. Its successor was gloomier as respects his health and his circumstances, but by that time the great Poem was in progress, and his mind had got sight of its true goal. 1824 was a period of stagnation and hopelessness. He himself has said of it—"The ideas which I had collected with pleasure, and which I reckoned peculiarly my own, were drooping away one after another. Fancy was returning from her flight; memory giving up her trust; what was vigorous becoming weak; and what was cheerful and active, dull and indolent." He has perpetuated the memory of that dreary season in the striking passage in the third book of his Poem, commencing—

"One of this mood I do remember well."

But a glorious revival was at hand. Ere the gloomy 1824 was over, the day had begun to break. In the beginning of January 1825, we find him thus announcing to his brother an event destined to be memorable: "Before the new-year, I had about three weeks of glorious study. Soaring in the pure ether of eternity, and linking my thoughts to the Everlasting Throne, I felt the healthy breezes of immortality revive my intellectual nerves, and found a point unshaken and unthreatened by the rockings and stormings of this world. Blank verse, the language of assembled gods, the language of eternity, was the form into which my thoughts fell. Some of them, I trust, shall outlive me in this world; and nothing, I hope, shall make me ashamed to meet them in the next." And he adds the sublime reflection—"Thoughts, acquirements, appendages of any kind, that cannot be carried with us out of time into the help and solace of our eternity, but must be left the unredeemed and unredeemable of death, are little

worth harbouring about us. It is the everlastingness of a thing that gives it weight and importance." The event here chronicled is the commencement of the *Course of Time*,—begun by him seven weeks after he had entered his twenty-seventh year. The circumstances connected with the origin of the poem are thus narrated by his brother:—

"One night in the beginning of December, when he was sitting alone in his room in great desolation of mind, to turn his thoughts from himself he put his hand to the table for a book, and lifted Hartley's *Oratory*. He opened it at Byron's lines to 'Darkness,' and read where he opened. While he was reading these, the Resurrection was suggested to him; and it struck him that it might be taken for a subject to write on. He instantly began to think, and, hastily running over in his mind various authors who had treated of it, was not satisfied with any of them. He thought that something new or different might be said on the subject, or, at least, that it might be set in a more striking light. A plan occurred to him. He immediately laid down the book, took up the first pen that he got his hands on, and began to write what now forms the second paragraph of the seventh book of the Poem, commencing,

'In customary glory bright, that morn, the Sun
Rose;'

and he proceeded till he had upwards of a thousand verses, intending the subject of the poem to be the Resurrection. Soon after completing what was then intended to be the first book, but what is now the seventh of the *Course of Time*, he removed from Glasgow to Moorhouse, to be beside his mother, who was then on her deathbed; but he still prosecuted the writing of the poem. As he went on, he began at intervals to select and arrange materials; and, in doing this, he saw many things that he would like to bring in, that would not come in naturally under the subject of the

Resurrection. He determined, however, to make use of these, and either to extend the plan or form a new one altogether. In the mean time, thoughts and words poured in on him from all quarters ; and he went on writing and selecting. One night, by-and-by, when he was sitting alone in Moorhouse old room, letting his mind wander back and forward over things at large, in a moment, as if by an immediate inspiration, the idea of the poem struck him, and the plan of it, as it now stands, stretched out before him ; so that, at one glance, he saw through it from end to end like an avenue, with the Resurrection as only part of the scene. He never felt, he said, as he did then ; and he shook from head to foot overpowered with feeling ; knowing that ‘to pursue the subject was to have no middle way between great success and great failure.’ From this time, in selecting and arranging materials, he saw through the plan so well, that he knew to what book, as he expressed it, ‘the thoughts belonged whenever they set up their heads.’ But the poem wanted a name ; and it was not till after it was written that he called it the *Course of Time*.”

After his mother's death, having finished three books of the poem, he made an excursion with some friends to Loch Lomond. On his return, and during his stay at Moorhouse this autumn (1825), he experienced “a state of distressing hesitation,” uncertain whether to write something for immediate sale, or to continue his poem. But there was more than the influence of embarrassed circumstances in this. Temperaments like Pollok's have almost always a period of deep gloom preceding the dawn of the clear golden light of spiritual day. The gloom or horror which at one time of their lives overtook Luther, Cromwell, Loyola, Fox, touched also Pollok with its raven wing. It did not culminate with him in any visible crisis, and he combated it bravely ; but in his letters we see it plainly. In November 1825, the year after the dark turning-point

was passed, we find him writing to his brother :—"Do not let yourself be low-spirited. 'Rejoice evermore.' I had a few days of that horror with which I was oppressed autumn was a year, not just so ill, and it is gone. Beware of it ; it is a dreadful thing ! I should like to see a sermon on the text, 'Be not righteous overmuch.'" But such mental phases do not pass off at once ; and immediately afterwards we find a momentary depression of health, joined to embarrassed circumstances, producing a renewal of the mental "horror." Just a month after writing the above-quoted letter, he went out to Moorhouse ; but, he says, "the coldness of the weather, and the badness of the house, and the heavy pressure of pecuniary concerns, when I was surrounded by a thousand thoughts, so overpowered my body and mind, that for some weeks I stooped down, and the billows passed over me. What I suffered in that time, God alone knows ; it was less than I deserve, but it was much. But I cannot speak to you by writing. My father noticed the fearful and dangerous state of my mind, and insisted that I should go to Glasgow,—hoping that company and better lodging might recover me ; and, indeed, though slowly, I did recover, and resumed my study." The night was now past. After this, we see nothing in the life and letters of Pollok that does not bespeak a man who rests too trustingly in God to be greatly cast down by anything that may befall him.

His poem now went on vigorously. By March he had finished other three books ; but "his breast troubled him," and he resolved not to write any more for some time. His pecuniary embarrassments appear to have been at this time at their height,—and yet how trifling the amount for which he suffered so much ! He says,—“I am dreadfully hunted just now for money, and have been threatened with prosecution from different quarters. And although my whole debt is not much above £20, and although £12 would free me from present embarrassment, I have not

the means of raising even that small sum. Thus menaced with creditors, and scarcely able to fly out of their way, I am a little perplexed; but I am labouring to let nothing take so much effect upon my spirits as to hurt my health." Two months afterwards he says, "I shall try what I can to extricate myself from this misery," and proposes to send the first three books of his poem to Edinburgh, to be published, without waiting for the rest. Fortunately he was dissuaded from this project by his brother; and, recommencing work on the 1st of June at Moorhouse, he finished the concluding four books, containing about three thousand five hundred lines, by the 7th of July,—an astonishing feat, which, he says, "I neither can nor wish to ascribe to anything but an extraordinary manifestation of Divine goodness. Although some nights I was on the borders of fever, I rose every morning equally fresh, without one twitch of headache; and, with all the impatience of a lover, hastened to my study. Towards the end of the last book, where the subject was overwhelmingly great, and where I, indeed, seemed to write from immediate inspiration, I felt the body beginning to give way. But now that I have finished, though thin with the great heat, and the almost uninterrupted mental exercise, I am by no means languishing and feeble. The serenity of mind which I have possessed is astonishing. Exalted on my native mountains, and writing often on the top of the very highest of them, I proceeded, from day to day, as if I had been in a world in which there was neither sin, nor sickness, nor poverty."

And so, in the sunny summer of the year of the great drought, 1826—after five weeks of "a Grecian atmosphere," which he felt of "incalculable benefit for mental pursuit"—Robert Pollok completed his immortal poem. Of his habits when composing it, his brother David gives the following account:—"During the three periods of writing, he kept a small jot-book beside him; and when-

ever anything occurred to him which he thought fit for any part of the work, he jotted it down, sometimes with pen and ink, and sometimes with a black-lead pencil. Every time that he sat down to write, he looked over these jottings to see if there were any materials among them for his present purpose; and when he had used or rejected anything, he drew his pen through it. Generally, he composed mentally, sometimes a few verses, and sometimes a paragraph or two, according to circumstances; and he did this at all times and in all places, but chiefly in bed. He once remarked to me, 'People say a man can do nothing lying in bed; but something may be done in it. The truth is, most of the *Course of Time* was composed in bed.' He usually wrote two or three hours at a sitting, and then went out to take the air, or engaged with his friends in lively conversation, to relax his mind; and whenever he felt himself refreshed, he resumed his study. He seldom sat later than eleven or twelve o'clock; but he generally lay awake a good part of the night, letting his mind wander over his subject, thinking and composing. When he came to a new paragraph, he concentrated his energies on it, as if it had been the only thing that he had ever written, or that he should ever write; so that, as he said, 'every paragraph might stand by itself, without needing support from what went before or came after.' He never stopped at a difficult place, but took good care to pause where he knew he could easily go on, so that it might always be pleasant for him to sit down to write. When he wrote at Moorhouse, he read at night to his brother John what he had written in the course of the day, and heard his opinion of it. While composing there the four books last written, though he went every Sabbath to church, he wrote, as he expressed it, 'Sabbath and Saturday:' in going to and from church, on the sublime regions between Moorhouse and Eaglesham, he composed (as he thought he could not be better employed) the usual

number of verses ; and on returning home, to secure them, he wrote them down. During the whole process he read little English, as it did not sufficiently arrest his attention, or withdraw his thoughts from himself ; but he occasionally read Latin and Greek for amusement or relaxation ; and he found the most difficult that he met with a great recreation compared with the writing of the poem, in which his mind, through vigour of exertion, many a time nearly overpowered his body. He kept the Bible constantly beside him, and read in different places of it, according to the nature of what he was composing ; so that his mind, it may be said, was all along regulated by the Bible. Finally, he prayed to God daily, morning and evening, for direction and assistance in the work." We may add as a characteristic of his general habits of study, that, however deeply engaged, interruptions never broke his temper, nor, indeed, seemed to disquiet him. His brother John says, "I often went in to him when he was writing the *Course of Time*, and he spoke to me whenever I went in, and began to talk just as if he had not been thinking ; nor did he ever seem to be busy, but had always leisure to do anything."

Three months after completing his poem, having finished the usual course of study at the Glasgow Divinity Hall of the Secession Church, Pollok went to Dunfermline for a couple of months, where he transcribed his poem, and forwarded the manuscript to Mr Blackwood—"the only publisher in Scotland," says Pollok, "to whom I would have given it." It was at once accepted, on terms which gave Pollok much satisfaction,—Mr Blackwood offering to take the risks of publication, to give him one-half of the profits, and to leave him the copyright of the poem. In the beginning of December Pollok went to Edinburgh, for the double purpose of superintending the printing of his poem, and of delivering his trial discourses before the Edinburgh Presbytery of the Secession Church, preparatory to being

licensed for the ministry of the Gospel. Here he was introduced by Mr Blackwood to Professor Wilson, a native of Renfrewshire like himself, and of whose assistance in the correction of the proof-sheets of his poem, Pollok speaks gratefully. On the 24th of March 1827, the *Course of Time* issued from the press; and on the 2d of May Robert Pollok's name was placed on the list of probationers of the United Secession Church.

After a hard and noble struggle, Pollok had now reached the crest of his life's wave. It was appointed to him just to reach it, and disappear. We have already mentioned the incidents attending the preaching of his first sermon in public. At the close of the service he was introduced to Dr Belfrage, a benevolent man and skilful physician, who told him kindly that he was in a worse state of health than he seemed to be aware of, and who induced him to go and stay with him at Slateford—a small village pleasantly situated near the foot of the Pentland Hills, three miles west of Edinburgh. Here Pollok stayed till the middle of July, receiving the utmost attention from his host, and constantly attended by the celebrated Dr Abercrombie. His poem had now widely spread his fame, and inquiries and attentions of all kinds poured in upon him. But his health declined. It was proposed that he should go to Italy to pass the winter, and as a voyage of experiment he took a sail to Aberdeen, where he remained for not quite three weeks. He then returned, *via* Edinburgh and Glasgow, to his father's house at Moorhouse, to take farewell of his relatives before setting off for the south.

The prospect of spending the winter in Italy gave Pollok great pleasure, and buoyed him up so much that he fancied himself much better than he was. On the 15th August he bade farewell to his father and relations, and set out from Moorhouse accompanied by a married sister. On arriving in Edinburgh, his medical friends saw that he was too weak to stand a voyage to Italy; but, as he was eager to

go, they secretly wrote to some physicians in London, to send him instead to some genial place in the south of England. By the time he reached London the reasonableness of this advice was but too apparent. By a singular change of sentiment, Pollok at once gave up his favourite design of going abroad, and said to his sister, who "never saw him look so happy-like,"—"We will get some rest now." On the last day of August, he and his sister set out for Southampton, where they took lodgings in a pleasant cottage at Shirley Common, about a mile from the town. The weather was delightful; and for a few days Pollok, though life was fast failing, was able to sit out on a chair, or walk a little in the cottage garden—a delightful spot, which the Poet enjoyed very much; while "the air," says his sister, "was so mild and placid that you could hear the apples falling from the trees." By the 6th of September, however, he became so weak that he was obliged to keep his bed; on the 10th, his medical advisers intimated that there was no hope of his recovery; and next day his relatives at Moorhouse were written to, but, in those days of slow travelling, could not arrive until all was over. On the 17th he grew rapidly worse, and death was seen to be approaching. About ten o'clock at night, after his sister had read some passages of the Bible to him, he sat up in bed, and prayed for a considerable time, remembering in his prayer his father and a number of his friends. He then lay down, and seemed to fall asleep. About eleven o'clock he was very quiet; and his sister, being much fatigued, lay down to rest herself for a little. About midnight he gave "a strange moan." His sister instantly rose, and went to his bedside, and looked on him. She saw he was still in life, but near his end; and she said to him, "You are going to leave us now, Robert!" At first he gave her no answer; but on her moistening his lips, he said, "Ay." For nearly half an hour he lay quiet again; but about half-past twelve he made a slight movement, as if he had

been going to raise himself in bed, and opened his eyes, which looked bright and peaceful. He then closed them, and lay down again, as if he had been going to sleep—remaining at ease in the same position till one o'clock, when he breathed his last.

Thus, in the early morning of Tuesday the 18th September 1827, died Robert Pollok, in the twenty-ninth year of his age. He was buried, with the rites of the Church of England, in the neighbouring churchyard of Millbrook, near the sea-shore; where a granite obelisk, erected by the admirers of his genius, marks his grave. But, as the inscription thereon saith, “His immortal Poem is his monument.”

Since the death of its author, the *Course of Time* has taken a high and permanent place in the literature of his country. It has gone through many editions, inspiring and elevating with its noble religious feelings the hearts of millions. Criticism and panegyric are alike unneeded: the world has pronounced upon it a judgment of unanimous admiration.

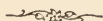
THE COURSE OF TIME

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

Invocation to the Eternal Spirit.—The subject of the Poem announced.—A period long after the Last Judgment described.—Two youthful Sons of Paradise, waiting on the battlements of Heaven, observant of the return of holy messengers, or the arrival from distant worlds of spirits made perfect, discover one directing his flight towards Heaven.—The hills of Paradise.—The Mount of God.—Welcome of the faithful servant.—The hill of the Throne of God pointed out to him.—The Sons of Paradise offer to guide him into the presence of the Most High.—The New-arrived, bewildered by the strange sights beheld in his flight, begs for knowledge, and the solution of the mysteries he has seen.—Describes his flight through Chaos, and arrival at the place of Everlasting Punishment—Wall of fiery adamant—The Worm that never dies—Eternal Death—Hell—The dreadful sights beheld there.—The youthful Sons of Heaven refer the New-arrived to an ancient Bard of Adam's race.—They fly towards his dwelling.—Flight through the fields of Heaven.—The Bard of Earth described—His bower in Paradise.—He is entreated to clear up the wondering doubt of the New-arrived, who tells what he has seen and conjectured.—The Bard informs him the gracious form he beheld in Hell is Virtue—Agrees to relate the history of the human race.

THE COURSE OF TIME.



BOOK I.

ETERNAL SPIRIT ! God of truth ! to whom
All things seem as they are—Thou who of old
The prophet's eye unscaled, that nightly saw,
While heavy sleep fell down on other men,
In holy vision tranced, the future pass
Before him, and to Judah's harp attuned
Burdens that made the Pagan mountains shake,
And Zion's cedars bow—inspire my song ;
My eye unscale ; me what is substance teach,
And shadow what, while I of things to come,
As past, rehearsing, sing the course of Time,
The second birth, and final doom of man.

The muse that soft and sickly woos the ear
Of love, or chanting loud, in windy rhyme,
Of fabled hero, raves through gaudy tale,
Not overfraught with sense, I ask not : such
A strain befits not argument so high.
Me thought and phrase severely sifting out
The whole idea, grant, uttering as 'tis

The essential truth—Time gone, the righteous saved,
The wicked damned, and Providence approved.

Hold my right hand, Almighty ! and me teach
To strike the lyre, but seldom struck, to notes
Harmonious with the morning stars, and pure
As those by sainted bards and angels sung,
Which wake the echoes of Eternity ;
That fools may hear and tremble, and the wise,
Instructed, listen of ages yet to come.

Long was the day, so long expected, past
Of the eternal doom, that gave to each
Of all the human race his due reward.
The sun, earth's sun, and moon, and stars, had ceased
To number seasons, days, and months, and years,
To mortal man ; Hope was forgotten, and Fear ;
And Time, with all its chance, and change, and smiles,
And frequent tears, and deeds of villany
Or righteousness, once talked of much as things
Of great renown, was now but ill remembered ;
In dim and shadowy vision of the past
Seen far remote, as country which has left
The traveller's speedy step, retiring back
From morn till even ; and long, Eternity
Had rolled his mighty years, and with his years
Men had grown old. The saints, all home returned
From pilgrimage, and war, and weeping, long
Had rested in the bowers of peace, that skirt
The stream of life ; and long—alas, how long
To them it seemed !—the wicked who refused
To be redeemed, had wandered in the dark
Of hell's despair, and drunk the burning cup
Their sins had filled with everlasting woe.

Thus far the years had rolled, which none but God
Doth number, when two sons, two youthful sons
Of Paradise, in conversation sweet—
For thus the heavenly muse instructs me, wooed
At midnight hour with offering sincere
Of all the heart, poured out in holy prayer—
High on the hills of immortality,
Whence goodliest prospect looks beyond the walls
Of heaven, walked, casting off their eye far through
The pure serene, observant if returned
From errand duly finished any came ;
Or any, first in virtue now complete,
From other worlds arrived, confirmed in good.

Thus viewing, one they saw, on hasty wing,
Directing towards heaven his course ; and now,
His flight ascending near the battlements
And lofty hills on which they walked, approached.
For round and round, in spacious circuit wide,
Mountains of tallest stature circumscribe
The plains of Paradise, whose tops, arrayed
In uncreated radiance, seem so pure,
That nought but angel's foot, or saint's elect
Of God, may venture there to walk. Here oft
The sons of bliss take morn or evening pastime,
Delighted to behold ten thousand worlds
Around their suns revolving in the vast
External space, or listen the harmonies
That each to other in its motion sings ;
And hence, in middle heaven remote, is seen
The mount of God in awful glory bright.
Within, no orb create of moon, or star,
Or sun, gives light ; for God's own countenance,
Beaming eternally, gives light to all.

But farther than these sacred hills, His will
Forbids its flow, too bright for eyes beyond.
This is the last ascent of virtue ; here
All trial ends, and hope ; here perfect joy,
With perfect righteousness, which to these heights
Alone can rise, begins, above all fall.

And now, on wing of holy ardour strong,
Hither ascends the stranger, borne upright—
For stranger he did seem, with curious eye
Of nice inspection round surveying all—
And at the feet alights of those that stood
His coming, who the hand of welcome gave,
And the embrace sincere of holy love ;
And thus, with comely greeting kind, began :—

Hail, brother ! hail, thou son of happiness !
Thou son beloved of God ! welcome to heaven,
To bliss that never fades ! thy day is past
Of trial, and of fear to fall. Well done,
Thou good and faithful servant ! enter now
Into the joy eternal of thy Lord.
Come with us, and behold far higher sight
Than e'er thy heart desired, or hope conceived.
See ! yonder is the glorious hill of God,
'Bove angel's gaze in brightness rising high.
Come, join our wing, and we will guide thy flight
To mysteries of everlasting bliss—
The tree and fount of life, the eternal throne
And presence-chamber of the King of kings.
But what concern hangs on thy countenance,
Unwont within this place ? Perhaps thou deem'st
Thyself unworthy to be brought before
The always Ancient One ? so are we too

Unworthy ; but our God is all in all,
And gives us boldness to approach His throne.

Sons of the Highest ! citizens of heaven !
Began the new-arrived, right have ye judged :
Unworthy, most unworthy is your servant,
To stand in presence of the King, or hold
Most distant and most humble place in this
Abode of excellent glory unrevealed.
But God Almighty be for ever praised,
Who, of His fulness, fills me with all grace
And ornament, to make me in His sight
Well pleasing, and accepted in His court.
But if your leisure waits, short narrative
Will tell why strange concern thus overhangs
My face, ill seeming here ; and haply, too,
Your elder knowledge can instruct my youth
Of what seems dark and doubtful, unexplained.

Our leisure waits thee : speak ; and what we can,
Delighted most to give delight, we will ;
Though much of mystery yet to us remains.

Virtue, I need not tell, when proved and full
Matured, inclines us up to God and heaven,
By law of sweet compulsion strong and sure :
As gravitation to the larger orb
The less attracts, through matter's whole domain.
Virtue in me was ripe. I speak not this
In boast ; for what I am to God I owe,
Entirely owe, and of myself am naught.
Equipped and bent for heaven, I left yon world,
My native seat, which scarce your eye can reach,
Rolling around her central sun, far out,

On utmost verge of light : but first to see
What lay beyond the visible creation,
Strong curiosity my flight impelled.
Long was my way and strange. I passed the bounds
Which God doth set to light, and life, and love ;
Where darkness meets with day, where order meets
Disorder, dreadful, waste, and wild ; and down
The dark, eternal, uncreated night
Ventured alone. Long, long on rapid wing
I sailed through empty, nameless regions vast,
Where utter Nothing dwells, unformed and void.
There neither eye nor ear, nor any sense
Of being most acute, finds object ; there
For aught external still you search in vain.
Try touch, or sight, or smell ; try what you will,
You strangely find nought but yourself alone.
But why should I in words attempt to tell
What that is like, which is and yet is not ?
This past, my path descending still me led
O'er unclaimed continents of desert gloom
Immense, where gravitation shifting turns
The other way, and to some dread, unknown,
Infernal centre downward weighs : and now,
Far travelled from the edge of darkness, far
As from that glorious mount of God to light's
Remotest limb, dire sights I saw, dire sounds
I heard ; and suddenly before my eye
A wall of fiery adamant sprung up,
Wall mountainous, tremendous, flaming high
Above all flight of hope. I paused and looked ;
And saw, where'er I looked upon that mound,
Sad figures traced in fire, not motionless,
But imitating life. One I remarked
Attentively ; but how shall I describe

What nought resembles else my eye hath seen ?
Of worm or serpent kind it something looked,
But monstrous, with a thousand snaky heads,
Eyed each with double orbs of glaring wrath ;
And with as many tails, that twisted out
In horrid revolution, tipped with stings ;
And all its mouths, that wide and darkly gaped,
And breathed most poisonous breath, had each a sting
Forkèd, and long, and venomous, and sharp ;
And in its writhings infinite, it grasped
Malignantly what seemed a heart, swollen, black,
And quivering with torture most intense ;
And still the heart, with anguish throbbing high,
Made effort to escape, but could not ; for
Howe'er it turned—and oft it vainly turned—
These complicated foldings held it fast ;
And still the monstrous beast with sting of head
Or tail transpierced it, bleeding evermore.
What this could image, much I searched to know ;
And while I stood, and gazed, and wondered long,
A voice, from whence I knew not, for no one
I saw, distinctly whispered in my ear
These words : “ This is the Worm that never dies.”

Fast by the side of this unsightly thing,
Another was portrayed, more hideous still ;
Who sees it once shall wish to see't no more.
For ever undescribed let it remain !
Only this much I may or can unfold—
Far out it thrust a dart that might have made
The knees of terror quake, and on it hung,
Within the triple bards, a being pierced
Through soul and body both. Of heavenly make
Original the being seemed, but fallen,

And worn and wasted with enormous woe.
And still around the everlasting lance
It writhed convulsed, and uttered mimic groans ;
And tried and wished, and ever tried and wished
To die ; but could not die. Oh horrid sight !
I trembling gazed, and listened, and heard this voice
Approach my ear : " This is Eternal Death."

Nor these alone. Upon that burning wall,
In horrible emblazonry, were limned
All shapes, all forms, all modes of wretchedness,
And agony, and grief, and desperate woe.
And prominent in characters of fire,
Where'er the eye could light, these words you read :
" Who comes this way, behold, and fear to sin !"
Amazed I stood ; and thought such imagery
Foretokened, within, a dangerous abode.
But yet to see the worst a wish arose :
For virtue, by the holy seal of God
Accredited and stamped, immortal all,
And all invulnerable, fears no hurt.
As easy as my wish, as rapidly,
I through the horrid rampart passed, unscathed
And unopposed ; and, poised on steady wing,
I hovering gazed. Eternal Justice ! Sons
Of God ! tell me, if you can tell, what then
I saw, what then I heard. Wide was the place,
And deep as wide, and ruinous as deep.
Beneath, I saw a lake of burning fire,
With tempest tossed perpetually ; and still
The waves of fiery darkness 'gainst the rocks
Of dark damnation broke, and music made
Of melancholy sort ; and overhead,
And all around, wind warred with wind, storm howled



*"I saw most miserable beings walk,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed ;
For ever wasting, yet enduring still ;
Dying perpetually, yet never dead."*

To storm, and lightning forkèd lightning crossed,
And thunder answered thunder, muttering sounds
Of sullen wrath ; and far as sight could pierce,
Or down descend in caves of hopeless depth,
Through all that dungeon of unfading fire,
I saw most miserable beings walk,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed ;
For ever wasting, yet enduring still ;
Dying perpetually, yet never dead.
Some wandered lonely in the desert flames.
And some in fell encounter fiercely met,
With curses loud, and blasphemies that made
The cheek of darkness pale ; and as they fought,
And cursed and gnashed their teeth, and wished to die,
Their hollow eyes did utter streams of woe.
And there were groans that ended not, and sighs
That always sighed, and tears that ever wept,
And ever fell, but not in Mercy's sight.
And Sorrow, and Repentance, and Despair
Among them walked, and to their thirsty lips
Presented frequent cups of burning gall.
And as I listened, I heard these beings curse
Almighty God, and curse the Lamb, and curse
The earth, the resurrection morn ; and seek,
And ever vainly seek, for utter death.
And to their everlasting anguish still,
The thunders from above responding spoke
These words, which, through the caverns of perdition
Forlornly echoing, fell on every ear—
“ Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not : ”
And back again recoiled a deeper groan.
A deeper groan ! oh, what a groan was that !
I waited not, but swift on speediest wing,
With unaccustomed thoughts conversing, back

Retraced my venturous path from dark to light.
Then up ascending, long ascending up,
I hasted on; though whiles the chiming spheres,
By God's own finger touched to harmony,
Held me delaying, till I here arrived,
Drawn upward by the eternal love of God,
Of wonder full and strange astonishment,
At what in yonder den of darkness dwells,
Which now your higher knowledge will unfold.

They answering said :—To ask and to bestow
Knowledge, is much of heaven's delight ; and now
Most joyfully what thou requir'st we would ;
For much of new and unaccountable
Thou bring'st. Something indeed we heard before,
In passing conversation slightly touched,
Of such a place ; yet rather to be taught,
Than teaching, answer, what thy marvel asks,
We need : for we ourselves, though here, are but
Of yesterday, creation's younger sons.
But there is one, an ancient bard of Earth,
Who, by the stream of life, sitting in bliss,
Has oft beheld the eternal years complete
The mighty circle round the throne of God :
Great in all learning, in all wisdom great,
And great in song ; whose harp in lofty strain
Tells frequently of what thy wonder craves ;
While round him, gathering, stand the youth of heaven,
With truth and melody delighted both.
To him this path directs, an easy path,
And easy flight will bring us to his seat.

So saying, they, linked hand in hand, spread out
Their golden wings, by living breezes fanned,



*“So saying, they, linked hand in hand, spread out
Their golden wings, by living breezes fanned,
And over heaven’s broad champaign sailed serene.”*

And over heaven's broad champaign sailed serene.
O'er hill and valley, clothed with verdure green
That never fades ; and tree, and herb, and flower,
That never fade ; and many a river, rich
With nectar, winding pleasantly, they passed ;
And mansion of celestial mould, and work
Divine. And oft delicious music, sung
By saint and angel bands that walked the vales,
Or mountain-tops, and harped upon their harps,
Their ear inclined, and held by sweet constraint
Their wing ; not long, for strong desire, awaked,
Of knowledge that to holy use might turn,
Still pressed them on to leave what rather seemed
Pleasure, due only when all duty's done.

And now beneath them lay the wished-for spot,
The sacred bower of that renownèd bard ;
That ancient bard, ancient in days and song ;
But in immortal vigour young, and young
In rosy health ; to pensive solitude
Retiring oft, as was his wont on earth.

Fit was the place, most fit for holy musing.
Upon a little mount that gently rose,
He sat, clothed in white robes ; and o'er his head
A laurel-tree, of lustiest, eldest growth,
Stately and tall, and shadowing far and wide—
Not fruitless, as on earth, but bloomed and rich
With frequent clusters, ripe to heavenly taste—
Spread its eternal boughs, and in its arms
A myrtle of unfading leaf embraced.
The rose and lily, fresh with fragrant dew,
And every flower of fairest cheek, around
Him smiling flocked : beneath his feet, fast by

And round his sacred hill, a streamlet walked,
Warbling the holy melodies of heaven.
The hallowed zephyrs brought him incense sweet ;
And out before him opened, in prospect long,
The River of Life, in many a winding maze
Descending from the lofty throne of God,
That with excessive glory closed the scene.

Of Adam's race he was, and lonely sat,
By chance that day, in meditation deep,
Reflecting much of Time, and Earth, and Man.
And now to pensive, now to cheerful notes,
He touched a harp of wondrous melody ;
A golden harp it was, a precious gift,
Which, at the Day of Judgment, with the crown
Of life, he had received from God's own hand,
Reward due to his service done on earth.

He sees their coming, and with greeting kind,
And welcome, not of hollow forgèd smiles,
And ceremonious compliment of phrase,
But of the heart sincere, into his bower
Invites: like greeting they returned. Not bent
In low obeisance, from creature most
Unfit to creature, but with manly form
Upright they entered in ; though high his rank,
His wisdom high, and mighty his renown.
And thus, deferring all apology,
The two their new companion introduced :

Ancient in knowledge, bard of Adam's race !
We bring thee one, of us inquiring what
We need to learn, and with him wish to learn.
His asking will direct thy answer best.

Most ancient bard! began the new-arrived,
Few words will set my wonder forth, and guide
Thy wisdom's light to what in me is dark.

Equipped for heaven, I left my native place :
But first beyond the realms of light I bent
My course ; and there, in utter darkness, far
Remote, I beings saw forlorn in woe,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed.
And there were groans that ended not, and sighs
That always sighed, and tears that ever wept
And ever fell, but not in Mercy's sight.
And still I heard these wretched beings curse
Almighty God, and curse the Lamb, and curse
The earth, the resurrection morn, and seek,
And ever vainly seek, for utter death.
And from above the thunders answered still,
" Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not."
And everywhere throughout that horrid den
I saw a form of excellence, a form
Of beauty without spot, that nought could see
And not admire, admire and not adore.
And from its own essential beams it gave
Light to itself, that made the gloom more dark.
And every eye in that infernal pit
Beheld it still ; and from its face, how fair !
Oh, how exceeding fair ! for ever sought,
But ever vainly sought, to turn away.
That image, as I guess, was Virtue, for
Nought else hath God given countenance so fair !
But why in such a place it should abide ?
What place it is ? what beings there lament ?
Whence came they ? and for what their endless groan ?
Why curse they God ? why seek they utter death ?

And chief, what means the resurrection morn ?—
My youth expects thy reverend age to tell.

Thou rightly deem'st, fair youth, began the bard ;
The form thou saw'st was Virtue, ever fair.
Virtue, like God, whose excellent majesty,
Whose glory virtue is, is omnipresent.
No being, once created rational,
Accountable, endowed with moral sense,
With sapience of right and wrong endowed
And charged, however fallen, debased, destroyed ;
However lost, forlorn, and miserable ;
In guilt's dark shrouding wrapt, however thick ;
However drunk, delirious, and mad,
With sin's full cup ; and with whatever damned
Unnatural diligence it work and toil,
Can banish Virtue from its sight, or once
Forget that she is fair. Hides it in night,
In central night ; takes it the lightning's wing,
And flies for ever on, beyond the bounds
Of all ; drinks it the maddest cup of sin ;
Dives it beneath the ocean of despair ;
It dives, it drinks, it flies, it hides in vain.
For still the eternal beauty, image fair,
Once stamped upon the soul, before the eye
All lovely stands, nor will depart ; so God
Ordains : and lovely to the worst she seems,
And ever seems ; and as they look, and still
Must ever look upon her loveliness,
Remembrance dire of what they were, of what
They might have been, and bitter sense of what
They are, polluted, ruined, hopeless, lost,
With most repenting torment rend their hearts.
So God ordains—their punishment severe

Eternally inflicted by themselves.
'Tis this, this Virtue hovering evermore
Before the vision of the damned, and in
Upon their monstrous moral nakedness
Casting unwelcome light, that makes their woe,
That makes the essence of the endless flame.
Where this is, there is hell, darker than aught
That he, the bard three-visioned, darkest saw.

The place thou saw'st was Hell ; the groans thou
 heard'st
The wailings of the damned, of those who would
Not be redeemed, and at the Judgment Day,
Long past, for unrepented sins were damned.
The seven loud thunders which thou heard'st, declare
The eternal wrath of the Almighty God.
But whence, or why they came to dwell in woe,
Why they curse God, what means the glorious morn
Of Resurrection—these a longer tale
Demand, and lead the mournful lyre far back
Through memory of Sin and mortal man.
Yet haply not rewardless we shall trace
The dark disastrous years of finished Time :
Sorrows remembered sweeten present joy.
Nor yet shall all be sad ; for God gave peace,
Much peace, on earth, to all who feared His name.

But first it needs to say, that other style
And other language than thy ear is wont,
Thou must expect to hear—the dialect
Of man ; for each in heaven a relish holds
Of former speech, that points to whence he came.
But whether I of person speak, or place,
Event or action, moral or divine ;

Or things unknown compare to things unknown ;
Allude, imply, suggest, apostrophise ;
Or touch, when wandering through the past, on moods
Of mind thou never felt'st ; the meaning still,
With easy apprehension, thou shalt take.
So perfect here is knowledge, and the strings
Of sympathy so tuned, that every word
That each to other speaks, though never heard
Before, at once is fully understood,
And every feeling uttered, fully felt.

So shalt thou find, as from my various song,
That backward rolls o'er many a tide of years,
Directly or inferred, thy asking, thou,
And wondering doubt, shalt learn to answer, while
I sketch in brief the history of Man.

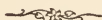
THE COURSE OF TIME

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

The inspired Bard commences the history of Man.—Description of Earth in her primeval state.—Powers and faculties of man at his creation.—The conditions on which he enjoyed the Divine favour.—His disobedience and fall.—Indignant astonishment of the New-arrived at man's ingratitude.—The Bard unfolds the scheme of Redemption.—Rapturous wonder of the Sons of Heaven.—They learn that all men are not saved.—Man's perversity.—The offer of free grace rejected by many.—Astonishment of the New-arrived at man ever claiming to merit ought of his Maker.—The Bible given for a guide to man—Its spirit and contents—Warped by men to favour unbelief, and their various creeds and interests.—Superstitious rites.—Idolatrous worship—Nature of sin—Why enlightened, reasonable beings, deserting truth, were lost, in part explained—Exemplified in kings and men in power—Their love of spiritual domination.—Picture of a corrupt, ambitious priest.—Free-will and moral responsibility of all mankind.—Their self-delusion.—All absorbed in Time's pursuits.—Presumption of mankind respecting the mysteries of religion.—Pride of the human heart.—Pride the first cause of man's perdition.—The workings of this passion described.—Its consequences.—The infatuation of its delusions.—Their ultimate tendency.—Pride the cause of rebellion against God.

THE COURSE OF TIME.



BOOK II.

THIS said, he waked the golden harp, and thus,
While on him inspiration breathed, began.

As from yon everlasting hills that gird
Heaven northward, I thy course espied, I judge
Thou from the Arctic regions came? Perhaps
Thou noticed on thy way a little orb,
Attended by one moon, her lamp by night,
With her fair sisterhood of planets seven,
Revolving round their central sun ; she third
In place, in magnitude the fourth. That orb,
New made, new named, inhabited anew,
Though whiles we sons of Adam visit still
Our native place, not changed so far but we
Can trace our ancient walks, the scenery
Of childhood, youth, and prime, and hoary age,
But scenery most of suffering and woe,—
That little orb, in days remote of old,
When angels yet were young, was made for Man,

And titled Earth, her primal virgin name.
Created first so lovely, so adorned
With hill, and dale, and lawn, and winding vale,
Woodland, and stream, and lake, and rolling seas,
Green mead, and fruitful tree, and fertile grain,
And herb, and flower ; so lovely, so adorned
With numerous beasts of every kind, with fowl
Of every wing and every tuneful note,
And with all fish that in the multitude
Of waters swam ; so lovely, so adorned,
So fit a dwelling-place for man, that as
She rose, complete, at the creating word,
The morning stars, the sons of God, aloud
Shouted for joy ; and God, beholding, saw
The fair design, that from eternity
His mind conceived, accomplished, and, well pleased,
His six days' finished work most good pronounced,
And Man declared the sovereign prince of all.

All else was prone, irrational, and mute,
And unaccountable, by instinct led.
But man He made of angel-form erect,
To hold communion with the heavens above ;
And on his soul impressed His image fair,
His own similitude of holiness,
Of virtue, truth, and love ; with reason high
To balance right and wrong, and conscience quick
To choose or to reject ; with knowledge great,
Prudence and wisdom, vigilance and strength,
To guard all force or guile ; and, last of all,
The highest gift of God's abundant grace,
With perfect, free, unbiassed will. Thus man
Was made upright, immortal made, and crowned
The king of all ; to eat, to drink, to do



“So adorned
With hill, and dale, and lawn, and winding vale,
Woodland, and stream, and lake, and rolling seas,
Green mead, and fruitful tree, and fertile grain,
And herb, and flower.”

Freely and sovereignly his will entire.
By one command alone restrained, to prove,
As was most just, his filial love sincere,
His loyalty, obedience due, and faith.
And thus the prohibition ran, expressed,
As God is wont, in terms of plainest truth :

Of every tree that in the garden grows
Thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree
That knowledge hath of good and ill, eat not,
Nor touch ; for in the day thou eatest, thou
Shalt die. Go, and this one command obey ;
Adam, live and be happy, and, with thy Eve,
Fit consort, multiply and fill the earth.

Thus they, the representatives of men,
Were placed in Eden, choicest spot of earth.
With royal honour and with glory crowned,
Adam, the lord of all, majestic walked,
With godlike countenance sublime, and form
Of lofty towering strength ; and by his side
Eve, fair as morning star, with modesty
Arrayed, with virtue, grace, and perfect love,
In holy marriage wed, and eloquent
Of thought and comely words, to worship God
And sing His praise, the Giver of all good ;
Glad, in each other glad, and glad in hope,
Rejoicing in their future happy race.

O lovely, happy, blest, immortal pair !
Pleased with the present, full of glorious hope.
But short, alas, the song that sings their bliss !
Henceforth the history of man grows dark ;
Shade after shade of deepening gloom descends ;

And Innocence laments her robes defiled.
Who further sings must change the pleasant lyre
To heavy notes of woe. Why ! dost thou ask,
Surprised ? The answer will surprise thee more.
Man sinned ; tempted, he ate the guarded tree—
Tempted of whom thou afterwards shalt hear—
Audacious, unbelieving, proud, ungrateful,
He ate the interdicted fruit, and fell,
And in his fall his universal race ;
For they in him by delegation were
In him to stand or fall, to live or die.

Man most ingrate ! so full of grace, to sin—
Here interposed the new-arrived—so full
Of bliss, to sin against the Gracious One !
The Holy, Just, and Good ! the Eternal Love !
Unseen, unheard, unthought of wickedness !
Why slumbered vengeance ? No, it slumbered not,
The ever just and righteous God would let
His fury loose, and satisfy His threat.

That had been just, replied the reverend bard,
But done, fair youth, thou ne'er hadst met me here ;
I ne'er had seen yon glorious Throne in peace.

Thy powers are great, originally great,
And purified even at the fount of light.
Exert them now, call all their vigour out ;
Take room, think vastly, meditate intensely,
Reason profoundly ; send conjecture forth,
Let fancy fly, stoop down, ascend ; all length,
All breadth explore, all moral, all divine :
Ask prudence, justice, mercy ask, and might ;
Weigh good with evil, balance right with wrong ;

With virtue vice compare, hatred with love ;
God's holiness, God's justice, and God's truth,
Deliberately and cautiously compare
With sinful, wicked, vile, rebellious man ;
And see if thou canst punish sin, and let
Mankind go free.—Thou fail'st ; be not surprised ;
I bade thee search in vain.—Eternal love—
Harp, lift thy voice on high !—Eternal love,
Eternal, sovereign love, and sovereign grace,
Wisdom, and power, and mercy infinite,
The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God,
Devised the wondrous plan ; devised, achieved,
And in achieving made the marvel more.
Attend, ye heavens ! ye heaven of heavens, attend !
Attend and wonder, wonder evermore !
When man had fallen, rebelled, insulted God ;
Was most polluted, yet most madly proud ;
Indebted infinitely, yet most poor ;
Captive to sin, yet willing to be bound ;
To God's incensed justice and hot wrath
Exposed, due victim of eternal death
And utter woe—Harp, lift thy voice on high !
Ye everlasting hills, ye angels, bow !
Bow, ye redeemed of men !—God was made flesh,
And dwelt with man on earth ! the Son of God,
Only begotten and well beloved, between
Men and His Father's justice interposed ;
Put human nature on ; His wrath sustained,
And in their name suffered, obeyed, and died ;
Making His soul an offering for sin,
Just for unjust, and innocence for guilt,
By doing, suffering, dying, unconstrained
Save by omnipotence of boundless grace,
Complete atonement made to God appeased ;

Made honourable His insulted law,
Turning the wrath aside from pardoned man.
Thus Truth with Mercy met, and Righteousness,
Stooping from highest heaven, embraced fair Peace,
That walked the earth in fellowship with Love.

O love divine ! O mercy infinite !—
The audience here in glowing rapture broke—
O love, all height above, all depth below,
Surpassing far all knowledge, all desire,
All thought ! The Holy One for sinners dies !
The Lord of Life for guilty rebels bleeds,
Quenches eternal fire with blood divine !
Abundant mercy ! overflowing grace !—
There, whence I came, I something heard of men ;
Their name had reached us, and report did speak
Of some abominable, horrid thing,
Of desperate offence they had committed.
And something, too, of wondrous grace we heard ;
And oft of our celestial visitants
What man, what God had done, inquired ; but they,
Forbid, our asking never met directly,
Exhorting still to persevere upright,
And we should hear in heaven, though greatly blessed
Ourselves, new wonders of God's wondrous love.
This hinting, keener appetite to know
Awaked ; and as we talked, and much admired
What new we there should learn, we hasted each
To nourish virtue to perfection up,
That we might have our wondering resolved,
And leave of louder praise, to greater deeds
Of loving-kindness due. Mysterious love !
God was made flesh, and dwelt with men on earth !
Blood holy, blood divine for sinners shed !

My asking ends, but makes my wonder more.
Saviour of men ! henceforth be Thou my theme ;
Redeeming love my study day and night.
Mankind were lost, all lost, and all redeemed !

Thou err'st again, but innocently err'st,
Not knowing sin's depravity, nor man's
Sincere and persevering wickedness.
All were redeemed ? Not all, or thou hadst heard
No human voice in hell. Many refused,
Although beseeched, refused to be redeemed,
Redeemed from death to life, from woe to bliss !

Canst thou believe my song when thus I sing ?
When man had fallen, was ruined, hopeless, lost—
Ye choral harps ! ye angels that excel
In strength ! and, loudest, ye redeemed of men !
To God, to Him that sits upon the throne
On high, and to the Lamb, sing honour, sing
Dominion, glory, blessing sing, and praise !—
When man had fallen, was ruined, hopeless, lost,
Messiah, Prince of Peace, Eternal King,
Died, that the dead might live, the lost be saved.
Wonder, O heavens ! and be astonished, earth !
Thou ancient, thou forgotten earth ! ye worlds, admire !
Admire and be confounded ! and thou hell,
Deepen thy eternal groan !—men would not be
Redeemed—I speak of many, not of all—
Would not be saved for lost, have life for death !

Mysterious song ! the new-arrived exclaimed,
Mysterious mercy ! most mysterious hate !
To disobey was mad, this madder far,
Incurable insanity of will !

What now but wrath could guilty men expect ?
What more could love, what more could mercy do ?

No more, resumed the bard, no more they could.
Thou hast seen hell. The wicked there lament :
And why ? for love and mercy twice despised.
The husbandman who sluggishly forgot
In spring to plough and sow, could censure none,
Though winter clamoured round his empty barns.
But he who, having thus neglected, did
Refuse, when autumn came, and famine threatened,
To reap the golden field that charity
Bestowed—nay, more obdurate, proud, and blind,
And stupid still, refused, though much beseeched,
And long entreated, even with Mercy's tears,
To eat what to his very lips was held
Cooked temptingly—he certainly, at least,
Deserved to die of hunger, unbemoaned.
So did the wicked spurn the grace of God ;
And so were punished with the second death.
The first, no doubt, punishment less severe
Intended ; death belike of all entire.
But this incurred, by God discharged, and life
Freely presented, and again despised,
Despised, though bought with Mercy's proper blood,
'Twas this dug hell, and kindled all its bounds
With wrath and inextinguishable fire.

Free was the offer, free to all, of life
And of salvation ; but the proud of heart,
Because 'twas free, would not accept ; and still
To merit wished ; and choosing, thus unshipped,
Uncompassed, unprovisioned, and bestormed,
To swim a sea of breadth immeasurable,

They scorned the goodly bark, whose wings the breath
Of God's eternal Spirit filled for heaven,
That stopped to take them in—and so were lost.

What wonders dost thou tell ? To merit !—how ?
Of creature meriting in sight of God,
As right of service done, I never heard
Till now. We never fell ; in virtue stood
Upright, and persevered in holiness ;
But stood by grace, by grace we persevered.
Ourselves, our deeds, our holiest, highest deeds
Unworthy aught ; grace worthy endless praise.
If we fly swift, obedient to His will,
He gives us wings to fly ; if we resist
Temptation, and ne'er fall, it is His shield
Omnipotent that wards it off ; if we
With love unquenchable before Him burn,
'Tis He that lights and keeps alive the flame.
Men surely lost their reason in their fall,
And did not understand the offer made.

They might have understood, the bard replied :
They had the Bible. Hast thou ever heard
Of such a book ? the author, God himself ;
The subject, God and man, salvation, life
And death—eternal life, eternal death—
Dread words ! whose meaning has no end, no bounds !
Most wondrous Book ! bright candle of the Lord !
Star of eternity ! the only star
By which the bark of man could navigate
The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
Securely ; only star which rose on Time,
And, on its dark and troubled billows, still,
As generation, drifting swiftly by,

Succeeded generation, threw a ray
Of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God,
The eternal hills, pointed the sinner's eye.
By prophets, seers, and priests, and sacred bards,
Evangelists, apostles, men inspired,
And by the Holy Ghost anointed, set
Apart, and consecrated to declare
To Earth the counsels of the Eternal One—
This Book, this holiest, this sublimest Book,
Was sent. Heaven's will, Heaven's code of laws entire
To man, this Book contained ; defined the bounds
Of vice and virtue, and of life and death ;
And what was shadow, what was substance taught.
Much it revealed ; important all ; the least
Worth more than what else seemed of highest worth.
But this of plainest, most essential truth :
That God is one, eternal, holy, just,
Omnipotent, omniscient, infinite ;
Most wise, most good, most merciful and true ;
In all perfection most unchangeable :
That man, that every man of every clime
And hue, of every age and every rank,
Was bad, by nature and by practice bad ;
In understanding blind, in will perverse,
In heart corrupt ; in every thought and word,
Imagination, passion, and desire,
Most utterly depraved throughout, and ill,
In sight of Heaven, though less in sight of man ;
At enmity with God his Maker born,
And by his very life an heir of death :
That man, that every man was, farther, most
Unable to redeem himself, or pay
One mite of his vast debt to God ; nay, more,
Was most reluctant and averse to be

Redeemed, and sin's most voluntary slave :
That Jesus, Son of God, of Mary born
In Bethlehem, and by Pilate crucified
On Calvary, for man, thus fallen and lost,
Died ; and, by death, life and salvation bought,
And perfect righteousness, for all who should
In His great name believe : That He, the third
In the eternal Essence, to the prayer
Sincere should come, should come as soon as asked,
Proceeding from the Father and the Son,
To give faith and repentance, such as God
Accepts ; to open the intellectual eyes,
Blinded by sin ; to bend the stubborn will,
Perversely to the side of wrong inclined,
To God and His commandments just and good ;
The wild rebellious passions to subdue,
And bring them back to harmony with heaven :
To purify the conscience, and to lead
The mind into all truth, and to adorn
With every holy ornament of grace,
And sanctify the whole renewed soul,
Which henceforth might no more fall totally,
But persevere, though erring oft, amidst
The mists of Time, in piety to God,
And sacred works of charity to men :
That he who thus believed, and practised thus,
Should have his sins forgiven, however vile ;
Should be sustained at mid-day, morn, and even,
By God's omnipotent, eternal grace :
And in the evil hour of sore disease,
Temptation, persecution, war, and death—
For temporal death, although unstinged, remained—
Beneath the shadow of the Almighty's wings
Should sit unhurt, and at the Judgment Day

Should share the resurrection of the just,
And reign with Christ in bliss for evermore :
That all, however named, however great,
Who would not thus believe, nor practise thus,
But in their sins impenitent remained,
Should in perpetual fear and terror live ;
Should die unpardoned, unredeemed, unsaved ;
And at the hour of doom should be cast out
To utter darkness in the night of hell,
By mercy and by God abandoned, there
To reap the harvests of eternal woe.

This did that Book declare in obvious phrase,
In most sincere and honest words, by God
Himself selected and arranged, so clear,
So plain, so perfectly distinct, that none
Who read with humble wish to understand,
And asked the Spirit, given to all who asked,
Could miss their meaning, blazed in heavenly light.

This Book, this holy Book, on every line
Marked with the seal of high divinity,
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love
Divine, and with the eternal heraldry
And signature of God Almighty stamped
From first to last,—this ray of sacred light,
This lamp, from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and in the night of Time
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow ;
And evermore beseeching men, with tears
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live.
And many to her voice gave ear, and read,
Believed, obeyed ; and now, as the Amen,
True, Faithful Witness swore, with snowy robes

And branchy palms surround the fount of life,
And drink the streams of immortality,
For ever happy, and for ever young.

Many believed ; but more the truth of God
Turned to a lie, deceiving and deceived :
Each, with the accursèd sorcery of sin,
To his own wish and vile propensity
Transforming still the meaning of the text.

Hear, while I briefly tell what mortals proved
By effort vast of ingenuity,
Most wondrous, though perverse and damnable,
Proved from the Bible, which, as thou hast heard,
So plainly spoke that all could understand.
First, and not least in number, argued some
From out this Book itself, it was a lie,
A fable, framed by crafty men to cheat
The simple herd, and make them bow the knee
To kings and priests. These in their wisdom left
The light revealed, and turned to fancies wild ;
Maintaining loud, that ruined, helpless man
Needed no Saviour. Others proved, that men
Might live and die in sin, and yet be saved,
For so it was decreed ; binding the will,
By God left free, to unconditional,
Unreasonable fate. Others believed
That he who was most criminal, debased,
Condemned, and dead, unaided might ascend
The heights of virtue ; to a perfect law
Giving a lame, half-way obedience, which
By useless effort only served to show
The impotence of him who vainly strove
With finite arm to measure infinite ;

Most useless effort, when to justify
In sight of God it meant ; as proof of faith
Most acceptable, and worthy of all praise.
Another held, and from the Bible held,
He was infallible, most fallen by such
Pretence ; that none the Scriptures, open to all,
And most to humble-hearted, ought to read
But priests ; that all who ventured to disclaim
His forged authority, incurred the wrath
Of Heaven ; and he who, in the blood of such,
Though father, mother, daughter, wife, or son,
Imbrued his hands, did most religious work,
Well-pleasing to the heart of the Most High.
Others in outward rite devotion placed ;
In meats, in drinks, in robe of certain shape,
In bodily abasements, bended knees ;
Days, numbers, places, vestments, words and names ;
Absurdly in their hearts imagining
That God, like men, was pleased with outward show.
Another, stranger and more wicked still,
With dark and dolorous labour, ill applied,
With many a gripe of conscience, and with most
Unhealthy and abortive reasoning,
That brought his sanity to serious doubt
'Mong wise and honest men, maintained that He,
First Wisdom, Great Messiah, Prince of Peace,
The Second of the uncreated Three,
Was nought but man, of earthly origin :
Thus making void the sacrifice divine,
And leaving guilty, men,—God's holy law
Still unatoned, to work them endless death.

These are a part ; but to relate thee all
The monstrous, unbaptised fantasies,

Imaginations fearfully absurd,
Hobgoblin rites, and moonstruck reveries,
Distracted creeds, and visionary dreams,
More bodiless and hideously misshapen
Than ever fancy, at the noon of night,
Playing at will, framed in the madman's brain,
That from this Book of simple truth were proved—
Were proved, as foolish men were wont to prove—
Would bring my word in doubt, and thy belief
Stagger, though here I sit and sing within
The pale of truth, where falsehood never came.

The rest, who lost the heavenly light revealed,
Not wishing to retain God in their minds,
In darkness wandered on. Yet could they not,
Though moral night around them drew her pall
Of blackness, rest in utter unbelief.
The voice within, the voice of God, that nought
Could bribe to sleep, though steeped in sorceries
Of hell, and much abused by whisperings
Of evil spirits in the dark, announced
A Day of Judgment, and a Judge—a day
Of misery or bliss ; and being ill
At ease, for gods they chose them stocks and stones,
Reptiles, and weeds, and beasts, and creeping things,
And spirits accursed—ten thousand deities ;
Imagined worse than he who craved their peace ;
And, bowing, worshipped these, as best beseeemed,
With midnight revelry obscene and loud,
With dark, infernal, devilish ceremonies,
And horrid sacrifice of human flesh,
That made the fair heavens blush. So bad was sin ;
So lost, so ruined, so depraved was man,
Created first in God's own image fair.

Oh, cursèd, cursèd Sin! traitor to God,
And ruiner of man! mother of Woe,
And Death, and Hell! wretched, yet seeking worse;
Polluted most, yet wallowing in the mire;
Most mad, yet drinking Frenzy's giddy cup;
Depth ever deepening, darkness darkening still;
Folly for wisdom, guilt for innocence;
Anguish for rapture, and for hope despair;
Destroyed, destroying; in tormenting, pained;
Unawed by wrath, by mercy unreclaimed;
Thing most unsightly, most forlorn, most sad,
Thy time on earth is past, thy war with God
And holiness. But who, oh, who shall tell
Thy unrepentable and ruinous thoughts!
Thy sighs, thy groans! Who reckon thy burning tears,
And damnèd looks of everlasting grief,
Where now, with those that took their part with thee,
Thou sitt'st in hell, gnawed by the eternal Worm,
To hurt no more on all the holy hills!

That those, deserting once the lamp of truth,
Should wander ever on, from worse to worse,
Erroneously, thy wonder needs not ask;
But that enlightened, reasonable men,
Knowing themselves accountable, to whom
God spoke from heaven, and by His servants warned,
Both day and night, with earnest pleading voice,
Of retribution equal to their works,
Should persevere in evil, and be lost—
This strangeness, this unpardonable guilt,
Demands an answer, which my song unfolds,
In part directly; but, hereafter, more,
To satisfy thy wonder, thou shalt learn,
Inferring much from what is yet to sing.

Know, then, of men who sat in highest place
Exalted, and for sin by others done
Were chargeable, the king and priest were chief.
Many were faithful, holy, just, upright,
Faithful to God and Man, reigning renowned
In righteousness, and, to the people, loud
And fearless, speaking all the words of life.
These at the Judgment Day, as thou shalt hear,
Abundant harvest reaped. But many, too,
Alas, how many ! famous now in hell,
Were wicked, cruel, tyrannous, and vile ;
Ambitious of themselves, abandoned, mad ;
And still from servants hasting to be gods,
Such gods as now they serve in Erebus.
I pass their lewd example by, that led
So many wrong, for courtly fashion lost,
And prove them guilty of one crime alone.
Of every wicked ruler, prince supreme,
Or magistrate below, the one intent,
Purpose, desire, and struggle, day and night,
Was evermore to wrest the crown from off
Messiah's head, and put it on his own ;
And in His place give spiritual laws to men ;
To bind religion, free by birth, by God
And nature free, and made accountable
To none but God, behind the wheels of State ;
To make the holy altar, where the Prince
Of Life, incarnate, bled to ransom man,
A footstool to the throne. For this they met,
Assembled, counselled, meditated, planned ;
Devised in open and secret ; and for this
Enacted creeds of wondrous texture, creeds
The Bible never owned, unsanctioned, too,
And reprobate in heaven ; but by the power

That made—exerted now in gentler form,
Monopolising rights and privileges,
Equal to all, and waving now the sword
Of persecution, fierce, tempered in hell—
Forced on the conscience of inferior men ;
The conscience, that sole monarchy in man,
Owing allegiance to no earthly prince ;
Made by the edict of creation free ;
Made sacred, made above all human laws ;
Holding of heaven alone ; of most divine
And indefeasible authority ;
An individual sovereignty, that none
Created might, unpunished, bind or touch ;
Unbound, save by the eternal laws of God,
And unamenable to all below.

Thus did the uncircumcised potentates
Of earth, debase Religion in the sight
Of those they ruled, who, looking up, beheld
The fair celestial gift despised, enslaved ;
And, mimicking the folly of the great,
With prompt docility despised her too.

The prince or magistrate, however named
Or praised, who, knowing better, acted thus,
Was wicked, and received, as he deserved,
Damnation. But the unfaithful priest, what tongue
Enough shall execrate ? His doctrine may
Be passed, tho' mixed with most unhallowed leaven,
That proved, to those who foolishly partook,
Eternal bitterness. But this was still
His sin, beneath what cloak soever veiled,
His ever-growing and perpetual sin,
First, last, and middle thought, whence every wish,

Whence every action rose, and ended both :
To mount to place and power of worldly sort ;
To ape the gaudy pomp and equipage
Of earthly state, and on his mitred brow
To place a royal crown. For this he sold
The sacred truth to him who most would give
Of titles, benefices, honours, names ;
For this betrayed his Master ; and for this
Made merchandise of the immortal souls
Committed to his care. This was his sin.

Of all who office held unfairly, none
Could plead excuse ; he least and last of all.
By solemn, awful ceremony, he
Was set apart to speak the truth entire,
By action and by word ; and round him stood
The people, from his lips expecting knowledge.
One day in seven, the Holy Sabbath termed,
They stood ; for he had sworn, in face of God
And man, to deal sincerely with their souls ;
To preach the gospel for the gospel's sake ;
Had sworn to hate and put away all pride,
All vanity, all love of earthly pomp ;
To seek all mercy, meekness, truth, and grace ;
And being so endowed himself, and taught
In them like works of holiness to move ;
Dividing faithfully the word of life.
And oft, indeed, the word of life he taught ;
But practising as thou hast heard, who could
Believe ? Thus was religion wounded sore
At her own altars, and among her friends.
The people went away, and, like the priest,
Fulfilling what the prophet spoke before,
For honour strove, and wealth, and place, as if

The preacher had rehearsed an idle tale.
The enemies of God rejoiced, and loud
The unbeliever laughed, boasting a life
Of fairer character than his, who owned
For king and guide the undefiled One.

Most guilty, villanous, dishonest man!
Wolf in the clothing of the gentle lamb!
Dark traitor in Messiah's holy camp!
Leper in saintly garb! assassin masked
In Virtue's robe! vile hypocrite accursed!
I strive in vain to set his evil forth!
The words that should sufficiently accurse
And execrate such reprobate, had need
Come glowing from the lips of eldest hell.
Among the saddest in the den of woe,
Thou saw'st him saddest—'mong the damned, most
damned.

But why should I with indignation burn—
Not well beseeeming here, and long forgot—
Or why one censure for another's sin?
Each had his conscience, each his reason, will,
And understanding, for himself to search,
To choose, reject, believe, consider, act.
And God proclaimed from heaven, and by an oath
Confirmed, that each should answer for himself;
And as his own peculiar work should be,
Done by his proper self, should live or die.
But sin, deceitful, and deceiving still,
Had gained the heart, and reason led astray.

A strange belief, that leaned its idiot back
On folly's topmost twig—belief that God

Most wise, had made a world, had creatures made,
Beneath His care to govern and protect—
Devoured its thousands. Reason, not the true,
Learnèd, deep, sober, comprehensive, sound ;
But bigoted, one-eyed, short-sighted Reason,
Most zealous, and sometimes, no doubt, sincere,
Devoured its thousands. Vanity to be
Renowned for creed eccentric, devoured
Its thousands ; but a lazy, corpulent,
And over-credulous faith, that leaned on all
It met, nor asked if 'twas a reed or oak ;
Stepped on, but never earnestly inquired
Whether to heaven or hell the journey led,
Devoured its tens of thousands, and its hands
Made reddest in the precious blood of souls.

In Time's pursuits men ran till out of breath.
The astronomer soared up, and counted stars,
And gazed, and gazed upon the heaven's bright face,
Till he dropped down dim-eyed into the grave ;
The numerist in calculations deep
Grew grey ; the merchant at his desk expired ;
The statesman hunted for another place,
Till death o'ertook him, and made him his prey ;
The miser spent his eldest energy
In grasping for another mite ; the scribe
Rubbed pensively his old and withered brow,
Devising new impediments to hold
In doubt the suit that threatened to end too soon ;
The priest collected tithes and pleaded rights
Of decimation to the very last.
In science, learning, all philosophy,
Men laboured all their days, and laboured hard,
And dying, sighed how little they had done :

But in religion, they at once grew wise.
A creed in print, though never understood ;
A theologic system on the shelf,
Was spiritual lore enough, and served their turn ;
But served it ill. They sinned, and never knew ;
For what the Bible said of good and bad,
Of holiness and sin, they never asked.

Absurd, prodigiously absurd, to think
That man's minute and feeble faculties,
Even in the very childhood of his being,
With mortal shadows dimmed and wrapped around,
Could comprehend at once the mighty scheme
Where rolled the ocean of eternal Love ;
Where Wisdom infinite its master-stroke
Displayed ; and where Omnipotence, oppressed,
Did travail in the greatness of its strength ;
And everlasting Justice lifted up
The sword to smite the guiltless Son of God ;
And Mercy smiling bade the sinner go !
Redemption is the science and the song
Of all eternity. Archangels day
And night into its glories look. The saints,
The elders round the throne, old in the years
Of heaven, examine it perpetually ;
And every hour get clearer, ampler views
Of right and wrong ; see virtue's beauty more ;
See vice more utterly depraved and vile ;
And this, with a more perfect hatred, hate ;
That daily love with a more perfect love.

But whether I for man's perdition blame
Office administered amiss, pursuit
Of pleasure false, perverted reason blind, •

Or indolence that ne'er inquired ; I blame
Effect and consequence, the branch, the leaf.
Who finds the fount and bitter root, the first
And guiltiest cause whence sprang this endless woe,
Must deep descend into the human heart,
And find it there. Dread passion ! making men
On earth, and even in hell, if mercy yet
Would stoop so low, unwilling to be saved,
If saved by grace of God. Hear, then, in brief,
What peopled hell, what holds its prisoners there.

Pride, self-adoring pride ! was primal cause
Of all sin past, all pain, all woe to come.
Unconquerable pride ! first, eldest sin,
Great fountain-head of evil ! highest source,
Whence flowed rebellion 'gainst the Omnipotent,
Whence hate of man to man, and all else ill.
Pride at the bottom of the human heart
Lay, and gave root and nourishment to all
That grew above. Great ancestor of vice !
Hate, unbelief, and blasphemy of God ;
Envy and slander, malice and revenge ;
And murder, and deceit, and every birth
Of damnèd sort, was progeny of pride.
It was the ever-moving, acting force,
The constant aim, and the most thirsty wish
Of every sinner unrenewed, to be
A god ; in purple or in rags, to have
Himself adored. Whatever shape or form
His actions took, whatever phrase he threw
About his thoughts, or mantle o'er his life,
To be the highest was the inward cause
Of all ; the purpose of the heart to be
Set up, admired, obeyed. But who would bow

The knee to one who served and was dependent?
Hence man's perpetual struggle, night and day,
To prove he was his own proprietor,
And independent of his God, that what
He had might be esteemed his own, and praised
As such. He laboured still and tried to stand
Alone, unpropped, to be obliged to none;
And, in the madness of his pride, he bade
His God farewell, and turned away to be
A god himself; resolving to rely,
Whatever came, upon his own right hand.

O desperate frenzy! madness of the will!
And drunkenness of the heart! that nought could
quench
But floods of woe, poured from the sea of wrath,
Behind which mercy set! to think to turn
The back on life original, and live!
The creature to set up a rival throne
In the Creator's realm! to deify
A worm! and in the sight of God be proud!
To lift an arm of flesh against the shafts
Of the Omnipotent, and 'midst His wrath
To seek for happiness!—insanity
Most mad! guilt most complete! See'st thou those
worlds
That roll at various distance round the throne
Of God, innumerable, and fill the calm
Of heaven with sweetest harmony, when saints
And angels sleep? As one of these, from love
Centripetal withdrawing, and from light,
And heat, and nourishment cut off, should rush
Abandoned o'er the line that runs between
Create and increate, from ruin driven

To ruin still, through the abortive waste,—
So pride from God drew off the bad ; and so
Forsaken of Him, He lets them ever try
Their single arm against the second death ;
Amidst vindictive thunders lets them try
The stoutness of their heart, and lets them try
To quench their thirst amidst the unfading fire ;
And to reap joy where He has sown despair ;
To walk alone, unguided, unbemoaned,
Where Evil dwells, and Death, and moral Night ;
In utter emptiness to find enough ;
In utter dark find light ; and find repose,
Where God with tempest plagues for evermore :
For so they wished it, so did pride desire.

Such was the cause that turned so many off
Rebelliously from God, and led them on
From vain to vainer still, in endless chase :
And such the cause that made so many cheeks
Pale, and so many knees to shake, when men
Rose from the grave ; as thou shalt hear anon.

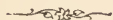
THE COURSE OF TIME

BOOK III.

A R G U M E N T.

Mirror of Truth.—The vain pursuits of man.—Conditions on which true happiness was offered.—Happiness the universal aim.—Philosophy unable to guide men to it.—The Tree of Holiness—Uprooted by the Fall.—The Son of God descended to earth to replant it.—The reason why so few reached it, and so many despised it.—Estimate of happiness in the different stages of life.—Fear alike in hope and in possession.—Many roads taken and plans tried to attain happiness.—Gold—The Miser.—Pleasure—Her enchantments—Her apparent loveliness and inward corruption—Allurements of the Harlot.—Fate of the votaries of Pleasure.—Earthly fame—Pursued as a source of happiness, in different ways by different characters—by the man of science—the poet—the divine—the hind—the fop—the beauty—the usurper—the warrior—the swearer and blasphemer—Other trifling human pursuits described:—The falconer—the hunter—the antiquarian—the naturalist—and the astrologer.—The sceptic or unbeliever.—Reproof and instructions of Wisdom.—Lessons taught by the natural world—by the faithful ministers of Christ—by the Bible—by sacred bards—by the judgments of God.—Men, notwithstanding, rush on to ruin.—The original Curse.—Wisdom, as defined by God, and by the world—by the Bible, and by the multitude—by the learned.—Remorse: Its agonies described.—Disappointment. Sketch of one of its victims—and his happy deliverance.—A Deathbed, and its lessons.—Earth possessed genuine native joys.

THE COURSE OF TIME.



BOOK III.

BEHOLD'ST thou yonder, on the crystal sea,
Beneath the throne of God, an image fair,
And in its hand a mirror large and bright ?
'Tis Truth, immutable, eternal Truth,
In figure emblematical expressed.
Before it Virtue stands, and smiling sees,
Well pleased, in her reflected soul, no spot.
The sons of heaven, archangel, seraph, saint,
There daily read their own essential worth ;
And, as they read, take place among the just ;
Or high, or low, each as his value seems.
There each his certain interest learns, his true
Capacity ; and going thence, pursues,
Unerringly, through all the tracts of thought,
As God ordains, best ends by wisest means.

The Bible held this mirror's place on earth.
But few would read, or, reading, saw themselves :
The chase was after shadows, phantoms strange,

That in the twilight walked of Time, and mocked
The eager hunt, escaping evermore :
Yet with so many promises and looks
Of gentle sort, that he whose arms returned
Empty a thousand times, still stretched them out,
And grasping, brought them back again unfilled.

In rapid outline thou hast heard of man,
His death, his offered life, that life by most
Despised ; the Star of God, the Bible, scorned,
That else to happiness and heaven had led,
And saved my lyre from narrative of woe.
Hear now more largely of the ways of Time,
The fond pursuits and vanities of men.

“Love God, love truth, love virtue, and be happy ;”
These were the words first uttered in the ear
Of every being rational made, and made
For thought, or word, or deed accountable.
Most men the first forgot, the second none.
Whatever path they took, by hill or vale,
By night or day, the universal wish,
The aim, and sole intent, was happiness.
But, erring from the heaven-appointed path,
Strange tracks indeed they took through barren wastes,
And up the sandy mountain climbing toiled,
Which pining lay beneath the curse of God,
And nought produced. Yet did the traveller look
And point his eye before him greedily,
As if he saw some verdant spot, where grew
The heavenly flower, where sprang the well of life,
Where undisturbed felicity reposed ;
Though Wisdom’s eye no vestige could discern,
That Happiness had ever passed that way.

Wisdom was right, for still the terms remained
Unchanged, unchangeable—the terms on which
True peace was given to man, unchanged as God,
Who, in His own essential nature, binds
Eternally to virtue happiness,
Nor lets them part through all His universe.

Philosophy, as thou shalt hear, when she
Shall have her praise, her praise and censure too,
Did much, refining and exalting man ;
But could not nurse a single plant that bore
True happiness. From age to age she toiled,
Shed from her eyes the mist that dimmed them still,
Looked forth on man, explored the wild and tame,
The savage and polite, the sea and land,
And starry heavens ; and then retired far back
To meditation's silent shady seat ;
And there sat pale and thoughtfully, and weighed,
With wary, most exact, and scrupulous care,
Man's nature, passions, hopes, propensities,
Relations, and pursuits, in reason's scale ;
And searched and weighed, and weighed and searched
again ;
And many a fair and goodly volume wrote,
That seemed well worded too, wherein were found
Uncountable receipts, pretending each,
If carefully attended to, to cure
Mankind of folly, to root out the briers,
And thorns, and weeds, that choked the growth of joy ;
And showing, too, in plain and decent phrase,
Which sounded much like Wisdom's, how to plant,
To shelter, water, culture, prune, and rear
The tree of happiness ; and oft their plans
Were tried, but still the fruit was green and sour.

Of all the trees that in Earth's vineyard grew,
And with their clusters tempted man to pull
And eat, one tree, one tree alone, the true
Celestial manna bore, which filled the soul—
The Tree of Holiness, of heavenly seed,
A native of the skies ; though stunted much
And dwarfed, by Time's cold, damp, ungenial soil,
And chilling winds, yet yielding fruit so pure,
So nourishing and sweet, as on his way
Refreshed the pilgrim, and begot desire
Unquenchable to climb the arduous path
To where her sister plants, in their own clime,
Around the fount, and by the stream of life,
Blooming beneath the Sun that never sets,
Bear fruit of perfect relish, fully ripe.

To plant this tree, uprooted by the fall,
To earth the Son of God descended, shed
His precious blood ; and on it evermore,
From off His living wings, the Spirit shook
The dews of heaven, to nurse and hasten its growth.
Nor was this care, this infinite expense,
Not needed to secure the holy plant.
To root it out, and wither it from earth,
Hell strove with all its strength, and blew with all
Its blasts ; and Sin, with cold consumptive breath,
Involved it still in clouds of mortal damp.
Yet did it grow, thus kept, protected thus,
And bear the only fruit of true delight,
The only fruit worth plucking under heaven.

But few, alas ! the holy plant could see,
For heavy mists that Sin around it threw
Perpetually : and few the sacrifice

Would make by which alone its clusters stooped,
And came within the reach of mortal man.
For this, of him who would approach and eat,
Was rigorously exacted to the full :
To tread and bruise beneath the foot the world
Entire ; its prides, ambitions, hopes, desires ;
Its gold and all its brodered equipage ;
To loose its loves and friendships from the heart,
And cast them off ; to shut the ear against
Its praise, and all its flatteries abhor ;
And having thus behind him thrown what seemed
So good and fair, then must he lowly kneel
And with sincerity, in which the Eye
That slumbers not nor sleeps, could see no lack,
This prayer pray : “ Lord God ! Thy will be done,
Thy holy will, howe’er it cross my own.”
Hard labour this for flesh and blood ! too hard
For most it seemed. So turning, they the Tree
Derided as mere bramble, that could bear
No fruit of special taste ; and so set out
Upon ten thousand different routes, to seek
What they had left behind—to seek what they
Had lost ; for still as something once possessed
And lost, true happiness appeared. All thought
They once were happy ; and even while they smoked
And panted in the chase, believed themselves
More miserable to-day than yesterday,
To-morrow than to-day. When youth complained,
The ancient sinner shook his hoary head,
As if he meant to say, Stop till you come
My length, and then you may have cause to sigh.
At twenty, cried the boy, who now had seen
Some blemish in his joys, How happily
Plays yonder child that busks the mimic babe,

And gathers gentle flowers, and never sighs !
At forty, in the fervour of pursuit,
Far on in disappointment's dreary vale,
The grave and sage-like man looked back upon
The stripling youth of plump, unsearèd hope,
Who galloped gay and briskly up behind,
And, moaning, wished himself eighteen again.
And he of threescore years and ten, in whose
Chilled eye, fatigued with gaping after Hope,
Earth's freshest verdure seemed but blasted leaves,
Praised childhood, youth, and manhood ; and de-
nounced

Old age alone as barren of all joy.
Decisive proof that men had left behind
The happiness they sought, and taken a most
Erroneous path : since every step they took
Was deeper mire. Yet did they onward run,
Pursuing Hope, that danced before them still,
And beckoned them to proceed ; and with their hands
That shook and trembled piteously with age,
Grasped at the lying shade, even till the earth
Beneath them broke, and wrapt them in the grave.

Sometimes indeed, when Wisdom in their ear
Whispered, and with its disenchanting wand
Effectually touched the sorcery of their eyes,
Directly pointing to the holy Tree,
Where grew the food they sought, they turned, sur-
prised
That they had missed so long what now they found.
As one upon whose mind some new and rare
Idea glances, and retires as quick,
Ere memory has time to write it down ;
Stung with the loss, into a thoughtful cast

He throws his face, and rubs his vexèd brow ;
Searches each nook and corner of his soul
With frequent care ; reflects, and re-reflects,
And tries to touch relations that may start
The fugitive again ; and oft is foiled ;
Till something like a seeming chance, or flight
Of random fancy, when expected least,
Calls back the wandered thought, long sought in vain ;
Then does uncommon joy fill all his mind ;
And still he wonders, as he holds it fast,
What lay so near he could not sooner find ;
So did the man rejoice, when from his eye
The film of folly fell, and what he, day
And night, and far and near, had idly searched,
Sprang up before him suddenly displayed ;
So wondered why he missed the Tree so long.

But few returned from Folly's giddy chase,
Few heard the voice of Wisdom, or obeyed.
Keen was the search, and various, and wide,
Without, within, along the flowery vale,
And up the rugged cliff, and on the top
Of mountains high, and on the ocean wave.
Keen was the search, and various, and wide,
And ever and anon a shout was heard :
“ Ho ! here's the Tree of Life ! come, eat, and live ! ”
And round the new discoverer quick they flocked
In multitudes, and plucked, and with great haste
Devoured ; and sometimes in the lips 'twas sweet,
And promised well ; but in the belly gall.
Yet after him that cried again, “ Ho ! here's
The Tree of Life ! ” again they ran and pulled,
And chewed again, and found it bitter still.
From disappointment on to disappointment,

Year after year, age after age, pursued—
The child, the youth, the hoary-headed man—
Alike pursued, and ne'er grew wise ; for it
Was folly's most peculiar attribute,
And native act, to make experience void.

But hastily as pleasures tasted turned
To loathing and disgust, they needed not
Even such experiment to prove them vain.
In hope or in possession, Fear, alike,
Boding disaster, stood. Over the flower
Of fairest sort, that bloomed beneath the sun,
* Protected most, and sheltered from the storm,
The spectre, like a dark and thunderous cloud,
Hung dismally, and threatened, before the hand
Of him that wished could pull it, to descend,
And o'er the desert drive its withered leaves ;
Or, being pulled, to blast it unenjoyed,
While yet he gazed upon its loveliness,
And just began to drink its fragrance up.

Gold many hunted, swet and bled for gold ;
Waked all the night, and laboured all the day.
And what was this allurement, dost thou ask ?
A dust dug from the bowels of the earth,
Which, being cast into the fire, came out
A shining thing that fools admired, and called
A god ; and in devout and humble plight
Before it kneeled, the greater to the less ;
And on its altar sacrificed ease, peace,
Truth, faith, integrity ; good conscience, friends,
Love, charity, benevolence, and all
The sweet and tender sympathies of life ;
And to complete the horrid, murderous rite,

And signalise their folly, offered up
Their souls and an eternity of bliss
To gain them—what?—an hour of dreaming joy,
A feverish hour that hasted to be done,
And ended in the bitterness of woe.

Most for the luxuries it bought, the pomp,
The praise, the glitter, fashion, and renown,
This yellow phantom followed and adored.
But there was one in folly farther gone,
With eye awry, incurable, and wild,
The laughing-stock of devils and of men,
And by his guardian angel quite given up—
The Miser, who with dust inanimate
Held wedded intercourse. Ill-guided wretch!
Thou mightst have seen him at the midnight hour,
When good men slept, and in light-winged dreams,
Ascended up to God—in wasteful hall,
With vigilance and fasting worn to skin
And bone, and wrapt in most debasing rags—
Thou mightst have seen him bending o'er his heaps,
And holding strange communion with his gold;
And as his thievish fancy seemed to hear
The night-man's foot approach, starting alarmed,
And in his old, decrepit, withered hand,
That palsy shook, grasping the yellow earth
To make it sure. Of all God made upright,
And in their nostrils breathed a living soul,
Most fallen, most prone, most earthy, most debased.
Of all that sold Eternity for Time,
None bargained on so easy terms with Death.
Illustrious fool! nay, most inhuman wretch!
He sat among his bags, and with a look
Which hell might be ashamed of, drove the poor

Away unalmsed ; and 'midst abundance died—
Sorest of evils!—died of utter want.

Before this shadow, in the vales of earth,
Fools saw another glide, which seemed of more
Intrinsic worth : Pleasure her name ; good name,
Though ill applied. A thousand forms she took,
A thousand garbs she wore ; in every age
And clime, changing, as in her votaries changed
Desire ; but inwardly the same in all.
Her most essential lineaments we trace ;
Her general features everywhere alike.

Of comely form she was, and fair of face ;
And underneath her eyelids sat a kind
Of witching sorcery, that nearer drew
Whoever with unguarded look beheld.
A dress of gaudy hue loosely attired
Her loveliness ; her air and manner frank,
And seeming free of all disguise ; her song
Enchanting ; and her words, which sweetly dropped
As honey from the comb, most large of promise,
Still prophesying days of new delight,
And rapturous nights of undecaying joy.
And in her hand, where'er she went, she held
A radiant cup that seemed of nectar full ;
And by her side danced fair delusive Hope.
The fool pursued, enamoured ; and the wise,
Experienced man, who reasoned much, and thought,
Was sometimes seen laying his wisdom down,
And vying with the stripling in the chase.

Nor wonder thou, for she was really fair,
Decked to the very taste of flesh and blood,

And many thought her sound within, and gay
And healthy at the heart ; but thought amiss.
For she was full of all disease : her bones
Were rotten ; consumption licked her blood, and drank
Her marrow up ; her breath smelled mortally ;
And in her bowels plague and fever lurked ;
And in her very heart, and reins, and life,
Corruption's worm gnawed greedily unseen.

Many her haunts. Thou mightst have seen her now
With Indolence lolling on the mid-day couch,
And whispering drowsy words ; and now at dawn,
Loudly and rough, joining the sylvan horn ;
Or sauntering in the park, and to the tale
Of slander giving ear ; or sitting fierce,
Rude, blasphemous, malicious, raving, mad,
Where fortune to the fickle die was bound.

But chief she loved the scene of deep debauch,
Where revelry, and dance, and frantic song,
Disturbed the sleep of honest men ; and where
The drunkard sat, she entered in, well pleased,
With eye brimful of wanton mirthfulness,
And urged him still to fill another cup.

And at the shadowy twilight, in the dark
And gloomy night, I looked, and saw her come
Abroad, arrayed in harlot's soft attire ;
And walk without in every street, and lie
In wait at every corner, full of guile.
And as the unwary youth, of simple heart
And void of understanding, passed, she caught
And kissed him, and with lips of lying said,
I have peace-offerings with me ; I have paid

My vows this day ; and therefore came I forth
To meet thee, and to seek thee diligently,
To seek thy face, and I have found thee here.
My bed is decked with robes of tapestry,
With carvèd work and sheets of linen fine ;
Perfumed with aloes, myrrh, and cinnamon.
Sweet are stolen waters ! pleasant is the bread
In secret eaten ! the goodman is from home.
Come, let us take our fill of love till morn
Awake ; let us delight ourselves with loves.
With much fair speech she caused the youth to yield,
And forced him with the flattering of her tongue.
I looked, and saw him follow to her house,
As goes the ox to slaughter ; as the fool
To the correction of the stocks ; or bird
That hastes into the subtle fowler's snare,
And knows not, simple thing, 'tis for its life.
I saw him enter in, and heard the door
Behind them shut ; and in the dark still night,
When God's unsleeping eye alone can see,
He went to her adulterous bed. At morn,
I looked, and saw him not among the youths.
I heard his father mourn, his mother weep ;
For none returned that went with her. The dead
Were in her house, her guests in depths of hell.
She wove the winding-sheet of souls, and laid
Them in the urn of everlasting death.

Such was the shadow fools pursued on earth,
Under the name of Pleasure ; fair outside,
Within corrupted, and corrupting still.
Ruined and ruinous, her sure reward,
Her total recompense, was still, as he,
The bard, recorder of Earth's seasons, sung,

“Vexation, disappointment, and remorse.”
Yet at her door the young and old, and some
Who held high character among the wise,
Together stood, and strove among themselves
Who first should enter, and be ruined first.

Strange competition of immortal souls!
To sweat for death! to strive for misery!
But think not Pleasure told her end was death.
Even human folly then had paused at least,
And given some signs of hesitation; nor
Arrived so hot, and out of breath, at woe.
Though contradicted every day by facts
That sophistry itself would stumble o’er,
And to the very teeth a liar proved
Ten thousand times, as if unconscious still
Of inward blame, she stood and waved her hand,
And pointed to her bower, and said to all
Who passed: Take yonder flowery path, my steps
Attend; I lead the smoothest way to heaven:
This world receive as surety for the next:
And many simple men, most simple, though
Renowned for learning much, and wary skill,
Believed, and turned aside, and were undone.

Another leaf of finished Time we turn,
And read of Fame, terrestrial fame, which died,
And rose not at the resurrection morn;
Not that by virtue earned, the true renown,
Begun on earth and lasting in the skies,
Worthy the lofty wish of seraphim—
The approbation of the Eye that sees
The end from the beginning, sees from cause
To most remote effect. Of it we read

In Book of God's remembrance, in the Book
Of Life, from which the quick and dead were judged ;
The Book that lies upon the Throne, and tells
Of glorious acts by saints and angels done ;
The record of the holy, just, and good.

Of all the phantoms fleeting in the mist
Of time, though meagre all, and ghostly thin,
Most unsubstantial, unessential shade,
Was earthly Fame. She was a voice alone,
And dwelt upon the noisy tongues of men.
She never thought, but gabbled ever on,
Applauding most what least deserved applause.
The motive, the result, was naught to her.
The deed alone, though dyed in human gore,
And steeped in widows' tears, if it stood out
To prominent display, she talked of much,
And roared around it with a thousand tongues.
As changed the wind her organ, so she changed
Perpetually ; and whom she praised to-day,
Vexing his ear with acclamations loud,
To-morrow blamed, and hissed him out of sight.

Such was her nature, and her practice such.
But, oh ! her voice was sweet to mortal ears,
And touched so pleasantly the strings of pride
And vanity, which in the heart of man
Were ever strung harmonious to her note,
That many thought, to live without her song
Was rather death than life. To live unknown,
Unnoticed, unrenowned ! to die unpraised,
Unepitaphed ! to go down to the pit,
And moulder into dust among vile worms,
And leave no whispering of a name on earth !—

Such thought was cold about the heart, and chilled
The blood. Who could endure it? who could choose,
Without a struggle, to be swept away
From all remembrance, and have part no more
With living men? Philosophy failed here,
And self-approving pride. Hence it became
The aim of most, and main pursuit, to win
A name, to leave some vestige as they passed,
That following ages might discern they once
Had been on earth, and acted something there.

Many the roads they took, the plans they tried.
The man of science to the shade retired,
And laid his head upon his hand, in mood
Of awful thoughtfulness, and dived, and dived
Again, deeper and deeper still, to sound
The cause remote; resolved, before he died,
To make some grand discovery, by which
He should be known to all posterity.

And in the silent vigils of the night,
When uninspired men repose, the bard,
Ghastly of countenance, and from his eye
Oft streaming wild unearthly fire, sat up,
And sent imagination forth, and searched
The far and near, heaven, earth, and gloomy hell,
For fiction new, for thought unthought before;
And when some curious rare idea peered
Upon his mind, he dipped his hasty pen,
And by the glimmering lamp, or moonlight beam
That through his lattice peeped, wrote fondly down
What seemed in truth imperishable song.

And sometimes, too, the reverend divine,

In meditation deep of holy things
And vanities of Time, heard Fame's sweet voice
Approach his ear ; and hung another flower,
Of earthly sort, about the sacred truth ;
And ventured whiles to mix the bitter text
With relish suited to the sinner's taste.

And oft-times too, the simple hind, who seemed
Ambitionless, arrayed in humble garb,
While round him, spreading, fed his harmless flock,
Sitting was seen by some wild warbling brook,
Carving his name upon his favourite staff ;
Or, in ill-favoured letters, tracing it
Upon the aged thorn, or on the face
Of some conspicuous, oft-frequented stone,
With persevering, wondrous industry ;
And hoping, as he toiled amain, and saw
The characters take form, some other wight,
Long after he was dead and in the grave,
Should loiter there at noon, and read his name.

In purple some, and some in rags, stood forth
For reputation. Some displayed a limb
Well-fashioned ; some, of lowlier mind, a cane
Of curious workmanship and marvellous twist.
In strength some sought it, and in beauty more.
Long, long, the fair one laboured at the glass,
And, being tired, called in auxiliar skill,
To have her sails, before she went abroad,
Full spread and nicely set, to catch the gale
Of praise. And much she caught, and much deserved,
When outward loveliness was index fair
Of purity within : but oft, alas !
The bloom was on the skin alone ; and when



*“ And oftentimes too, the simple hind, who seemed
Ambitionless, arrayed in humble garb,
While round him, spreading, fed his harmless flock,
Sitting was seen by some wild warbling brook,
Carving his name upon his favourite staff;
Or, in ill-favoured letters, tracing it
Upon the aged thorn.”*

She saw, sad sight ! the roses on her cheek
 Wither, and heard the voice of Fame retire
 And die away, she heaved most piteous sighs,
 And wept most lamentable tears ; and whiles,
 In wild delirium, made rash attempt—
 Unholy mimicry of Nature's work !—
 To re-create, with frail and mortal things,
 Her withered face. Attempt how fond and vain !
 Her frame itself soon mouldered down to dust ;
 And in the land of deep forgetfulness,
 Her beauty and her name were laid beside
 Eternal silence and the loathsome worm ;
 Into whose darkness flattery ventured not ;
 Where none had ears to hear the voice of Fame.

Many the roads they took, the plans they tried ;
 And awful oft the wickedness they wrought.
 To be observed, some scrambled up to thrones,
 And sat in vestures dripping wet with gore.
 The warrior dipped his sword in blood, and wrote
 His name on lands and cities desolate.
 The rich bought fields, and houses built, and raised
 The monumental piles up to the clouds,
 And called them by their names : and, strange to
 tell !

Rather than be unknown, and pass away
 Obscurely to the grave, some, small of soul,
 That else had perished unobserved, acquired
 Considerable renown by oaths profane ;
 By jesting boldly with all sacred things ;
 And uttering fearlessly whate'er occurred ;
 Wild, blasphemous, perditionable thoughts,
 That Satan in them moved ; by wiser men
 Suppressed, and quickly banished from the mind.

Many the roads they took, the plans they tried ;
But all in vain. Who grasped at earthly Fame,
Grasped wind : nay, worse, a serpent grasped, that
through
His hand slid smoothly, and was gone ; but left
A sting behind which wrought him endless pain.
For oft her voice was old Abaddon's lure,
By which he charmed the foolish soul to death.

So happiness was sought in pleasure, gold,
Renown, by many sought. But should I sing
Of all the trifling race, my time, thy faith,
Would fail, of things erectly organised,
And having rational, articulate voice,
And claiming outward brotherhood with man,
Of him that laboured sorely, in his sweat
Smoking afar, then hurried to the wine,
Deliberately resolving to be mad ;
Of him who taught the ravenous bird to fly
This way or that, thereby supremely blessed ;
Or rode in fury with the howling pack,
Affronting much the noble animal
He spurred into such company ; of him
Who down into the bowels of the earth
Descended deeply, to bring up the wreck
Of some old earthenware, which having stowed
With every proper care, he home returned,
O'er many a sea, and many a league of land,
Triumphantly to show the marvellous prize ;
And him that vexed his brain, and theories built
Of gossamer upon the brittle winds,
Perplexed exceedingly why shells were found
Upon the mountain-tops, but wondering not
Why shells were found at all, more wondrous still !

Of him who strange enjoyment took in tales
Of fairy folk, and sleepless ghosts, and sounds
Unearthly, whispering in the ear of night
Disastrous things ; and him who still foretold
Calamity which never came, and lived
In terror all his days of comets rude,
That should unmannerly and lawless drive
Athwart the path of Earth, and burn mankind ;
As if the appointed hour of doom, by God
Appointed, ere its time should come ! as if
Too small the number of substantial ills,
And real fears, to vex the sons of men.
These, had they not possessed immortal souls,
And been accountable, might have been passed
With laughter, and forgot ; but as it was,
And is, their folly asks a serious tear.

Keen was the search, and various, and wide,
For happiness. Take one example more,
So strange, that common fools looked on amazed ;
And wise and sober men together drew,
And trembling stood ; and angels in the heavens
Grew pale, and talked of vengeance as at hand ;
The sceptic's route, the unbeliever's, who,
Despising reason, revelation, God,
And kicking 'gainst the pricks of conscience, rushed
Deliriously upon the bossy shield
Of the Omnipotent ; and in his heart
Purposed to deify the idol chance ;
And laboured hard, oh, labour worse than naught !
And toiled with dark and crooked reasoning,
To make the fair and lovely earth, which dwelt
In sight of Heaven, a cold and fatherless,
Forsaken thing, that wandered on, forlorn,

Undestined, uncompassioned, unupheld ;
A vapour eddying in the whirl of chance,
And soon to vanish everlastingly.
He travailed sorely, and made many a tack,
His sails oft shifting, to arrive, dread thought !
Arrive at utter nothingness ; and have
Being no more, no feeling, memory,
No lingering consciousness that e'er he was.
Guilt's midnight wish ! last, most abhorred thought !
Most desperate effort of extremest sin !
Others, preoccupied, ne'er saw true Hope ;
He, seeing, aimed to stab her to the heart,
And with infernal chemistry to wring
The last sweet drop from sorrow's cup of gall ;
To quench the only ray that cheered the earth,
And leave mankind in night which had no star.
Others the streams of Pleasure troubled ; he
Toiled much to dry her very fountain-head.
Unpardonable man ! sold under sin !
He was the devil's pioneer who cut
The fences down of Virtue, sapped her walls,
And opened a smooth and easy way to death.
Traitor to all existence, to all life !
Soul-suicide ! determined foe of being !
Intended murderer of God, Most High !
Strange road, most strange ! to seek for happiness :
Hell's madhouses are full of such, too fierce,
Too furiously insane, and desperate,
To rage unbound 'mong evil spirits damned.

Fertile was earth in many things, not least
In fools who mercy both and judgment scorned,
Scorned love, experience scorned, and onward rushed
To swift destruction, giving all reproof



*“ The gentle flowers
Retired, and, stooping o’er the wilderness,
Talked of humility, and peace, and love.”*

And all instruction to the winds ; and much
Of both they had, and much despised of both.

Wisdom took up her harp, and stood in place
Of frequent concourse, stood in every gate,
By every way, and walked in every street ;
And, lifting up her voice, proclaimed : “ Be wise,
Ye fools ! be of an understanding heart ;
Forsake the wicked, come not near his house,
Pass by, make haste, depart and turn away.
Me follow, me, whose ways are pleasantness,
Whose paths are peace, whose end is perfect joy.”
The seasons came and went, and went and came,
To teach men gratitude ; and as they passed,
Gave warning of the lapse of time, that else
Had stolen unheeded by. The gentle flowers
Retired, and, stooping o’er the wilderness,
Talked of humility, and peace, and love.
The dews came down unseen at evening-tide,
And silently their bounties shed, to teach
Mankind unostentatious charity.
With arm in arm the forest rose on high,
And lesson gave of brotherly regard.
And on the rugged mountain-brow exposed,
Bearing the blast alone, the ancient oak
Stood, lifting high his mighty arm, and still
To courage in distress exhorted loud.
The flocks, the herds, the birds, the streams, the breeze,
Attuned the heart to melody and love.
Mercy stood in the cloud, with eye that wept
Essential love ! and from her glorious bow,
Bending to kiss the Earth in token of peace,
With her own lips, her gracious lips, which God
Of sweetest accent made, she whispered still,

She whispered to Revenge, Forgive, forgive.
The Sun, rejoicing round the earth, announced
Daily the wisdom, power, and love of God.
The Moon awoke, and from her maiden face,
Shedding her cloudy locks, looked meekly forth,
And with her virgin stars walked in the heavens,
Walked nightly there, conversing, as she walked,
Of purity, and holiness, and God.
In dreams and visions, sleep instructed much.
Day uttered speech to day, and night to night
Taught knowledge. Silence had a tongue ; the grave,
The darkness, and the lonely waste had each
A tongue, that ever said, Man ! think of God !
Think of thyself ! think of eternity !—
Fear God, the thunder said ; Fear God, the waves.
Fear God, the lightning of the storm replied.
Fear God, deep loudly answered back to deep.
And in the temples of the Holy One,
Messiah's messengers, the faithful few,
Faithful 'mong many false, the Bible opened,
And cried, Repent ! repent, ye sons of men !
Believe, be saved ; and reasoned awfully
Of temperance, righteousness, and judgment soon
To come, of ever-during life and death :
And chosen bards from age to age awoke
The sacred lyre, and full on folly's ear
Numbers of righteous indignation poured :
And God omnipotent, when mercy failed,
Made bare His holy arm, and with the stroke
Of vengeance smote ; the fountains of the deep
Broke up, heaven's windows opened, and sent on men
A flood of wrath, sent plague and famine forth ;
With earthquake rocked the world beneath, with storms
Above laid cities waste, and turned fat lands



*“ The Moon awoke, and from her maiden face,
Shedding her cloudy locks, looked meekly forth.”*

To barrenness; and with the sword of war
In fury marched, and gave them blood to drink.
Angels remonstrated, Mercy beseeched,
Heaven smiled and frowned, Hell groaned, Time fled,
Death shook

His dart, and threatened to make repentance vain,—
Incredible assertion! men rushed on
Determinedly to ruin; shut their ears,
Their eyes, to all advice, to all reproof;
O'er mercy and o'er judgment, downward rushed
To misery; and, most incredible
Of all! to misery rushed along the way
Of disappointment and remorse, where still,
At every step, adders, in Pleasure's form,
Stung mortally; and Joys—whose bloomy cheeks
Seemed glowing high with immortality,
Whose bosoms prophesied superfluous bliss—
While in the arms received, and locked in close
And riotous embrace, turned pale and cold,
And died, and smelled of putrefaction rank;
Turned, in the very moment of delight,
A loathsome heavy corpse, that, with the clear
And hollow eyes of death, stared horribly.

All tribes, all generations of the earth,
Thus wantonly to ruin drove alike.
We heard, indeed, of golden and silver days,
And of primeval innocence unstained;
A pagan tale! but by baptisèd bards,
Philosophers, and statesmen, who were still
Held wise and cunning men, talked of so much,
That most believed it so, and asked not why.

The pair, the family first made, were ill;

And for their great, peculiar sin, incurred
The Curse, and left it due to all their race ;
And bold example gave of every crime,
Hate, murder, unbelief, reproach, revenge.
A time, 'tis true, there came, of which thou soon
Shalt hear—the Sabbath-Day, the Jubilee
Of earth, when righteousness and peace prevailed.
This time except, who writes the history
Of men, and writes it true, must write them bad ;
Who reads, must read of violence and blood.
The man, who could the story of one day
Peruse—the wrongs, oppressions, cruelties,
Deceits, and perjuries, and vanities,
Rewarded worthlessness, rejected worth,
Assassinations, robberies, thefts, and wars,
Disastrous accidents, life thrown away,
Divinity insulted, Heaven despised,
Religion scorned—and not been sick at night,
And sad, had gathered greater store of mirth
Than ever wise man in the world could find.

One cause of folly, one especial cause,
Was this: Few knew what wisdom was, though well
Defined in God's own words, and printed large
On heaven and earth in characters of light,
And sounded in the ear by every wind.

Wisdom is humble, said the voice of God.
'Tis proud, the world replied. Wisdom, said God,
Forgives, forbears, and suffers, not for fear
Of man, but God. Wisdom revenges, said
The world ; is quick and deadly of resentment,
Thrusts at the very shadow of affront,
And hastes, by death, to wipe its honour clean.

Wisdom, said God, loves enemies, entreats,
Solicits, begs for peace. Wisdom, replied
The world, hates enemies, will not ask peace,
Conditions spurns, and triumphs in their fall.
Wisdom mistrusts itself, and leans on Heaven,
Said God. It trusts and leans upon itself,
The world replied. Wisdom retires, said God,
And counts it bravery to bear reproach,
And shame, and lowly poverty upright ;
And weeps with all who have just cause to weep.
Wisdom, replied the world, struts forth to gaze,
Treads the broad stage of life with clamorous foot,
Attracts all praises, counts it bravery
Alone to wield the sword, and rush on death ;
And never weeps, but for its own disgrace.
Wisdom, said God, is highest when it stoops
Lowest before the Holy Throne ; throws down
Its crown, abased ; forgets itself, admires,
And breathes adoring praise. There Wisdom stoops
Indeed, the world replied—there stoops, because
It must, but stoops with dignity ; and thinks
And meditates the while of inward worth.

Thus did Almighty God, and thus the world,
Wisdom define : and most the world believed,
And boldly called the truth of God a lie.
Hence he, that to the worldly wisdom shaped
His character, became the favourite
Of men, was honourable termed, a man
Of spirit, noble, glorious, lofty soul !
And, as he crossed the earth in chase of dreams,
Received prodigious shouts of warm applause.
Hence, who to godly wisdom framed his life
Was counted mean, and spiritless, and vile ;

And as he walked obscurely in the path
Which led to heaven, fools hissed with serpent tongue,
And poured contempt upon his holy head,
And poured contempt on all who praised his name.

But false as this account of wisdom was,
The world's, I mean, it was its best, the creed
Of sober, grave, and philosophic men,
With much research and cogitation framed ;
Of men, who with the vulgar scorned to sit.

The popular belief seemed rather worse,
When heard replying to the voice of truth.

The wise man, said the Bible, walks with God ;
Surveys, far on, the endless line of life ;
Values his soul, thinks of eternity,
Both worlds considers, and provides for both ;
With reason's eye his passions guards ; abstains
From evil ; lives on hope, on hope, the fruit
Of faith ; looks upward, purifies his soul,
Expands his wings, and mounts into the sky ;
Passes the sun, and gains his Father's house,
And drinks with angels from the fount of bliss.

The multitude aloud replied—replied
By practice, for they were not bookish men,
Nor apt to form their principles in words—
The wise man, first of all, eradicates,
As much as possible, from out his mind,
All thought of death, God, and eternity ;
Admires the world, and thinks of time alone ;
Avoids the Bible, all reproof avoids ;
Rocks conscience, if he can, asleep ; puts out

The eye of reason, prisons, tortures, binds,
And makes her thus, by violence and force,
Give wicked evidence against herself ;
Lets passion loose, the substance leaves, pursues
The shadow vehemently, but ne'er o'ertakes ;
Puts by the cup of holiness and joy,
And drinks, carouses deeply, in the bowl
Of death ; grovels in dust, pollutes, destroys
His soul ; is miserable to acquire
More misery ; deceives to be deceived ;
Strives, labours to the last to shun the truth ;
Strives, labours to the last to damn himself ;
Turns desperate, shudders, groans, blasphemes, and dies,
And sinks—where could he else?—to endless woe ;
And drinks the wine of God's eternal wrath.

The learnèd thus, and thus the unlearnèd world,
Wisdom defined. In sound they disagreed ;
In substance, in effect, in end, the same ;
And equally to God and truth opposed,
Opposed as darkness to the light of heaven.
Yet were there some that seemed well-meaning men,
Who systems planned, expressed in supple words,
Which praised the man as wisest, that in one
United both ; pleased God, and pleased the world ;
And with the saint and with the sinner had,
Changing his garb unseen, a good report.
And many thought their definition best,
And in their wisdom grew exceeding wise.

Union abhorred ! dissimulation vain !
Could Holiness embrace the harlot Sin ?
Could life wed death ? Could God with Mammon
dwell ?

Oh, foolish men ! oh, men for ever lost !
In spite of mercy lost ! in spite of wrath !
In spite of disappointment and remorse,
Which made the way to ruin ruinous !

Hear what they were : The progeny of Sin
Alike, and oft combined ; but differing much
In mode of giving pain. As felt the gross
Material part, when in the furnace cast,
So felt the soul, the victim of Remorse.
It was a fire which on the verge of God's
Commandments burned, and on the vitals fed
Of all who passed. Who passed, there met Remorse ;
A violent fever seized his soul ; the heavens
Above, the earth beneath, seemed glowing brass,
Heated seven times ; he heard dread voices speak,
And mutter horrid prophecies of pain,
Severer and severer yet to come ;
And as he writhed and quivered, scorched within,
The Fury round his torrid temples flapped
Her fiery wings, and breathed upon his lips
And parchèd tongue the withering blasts of hell.
It was the suffering begun thou saw'st,
In symbol of the Worm that never dies.

The other, Disappointment, rather seemed
Negation of delight. It was a thing
Sluggish and torpid, tending towards death.
Its breath was cold, and made the sportive blood
Stagnant, and dull, and heavy, round the wheels
Of life. The roots of that whereon it blew,
Decayed, and with the genial soil no more
Held sympathy ; the leaves, the branches drooped,
And mouldered slowly down to formless dust ;

Not tossed and driven by violence of winds,
But withering where they sprang, and rotting there.
Long disappointed, disappointed still,
The hopeless man, hopeless in his main wish,
As if returning back to nothing, felt ;
In strange vacuity of being hung ;
And rolled, and rolled his eye on emptiness,
That seemed to grow more empty every hour.

One of this mood I do remember well :
We name him not—what now are earthly names !
In humble dwelling born, retired, remote ;
In rural quietude, 'mong hills, and streams,
And melancholy deserts, where the Sun
Saw, as he passed, a shepherd only, here
And there, watching his little flock, or heard
The ploughman talking to his steers. His hopes,
His morning hopes, awoke before him, smiling,
Among the dews and holy mountain airs ;
And fancy coloured them with every hue
Of heavenly loveliness. But soon his dreams
Of childhood fled away—those rainbow dreams
So innocent and fair, that withered Age,
Even at the grave, cleared up his dusty eye,
And passing all between, looked fondly back
To see them once again ere he departed :
These fled away, and anxious thought, that wished
To go, yet whither knew not well to go,
Possessed his soul, and held it still awhile.
He listened, and heard from far the voice of Fame,
Heard, and was charmed ; and deep and sudden vow
Of resolution made to be renowned ;
And deeper vowed again to keep his vow.
His parents saw—his parents whom God made

Of kindest heart, saw, and indulged his hope.
The ancient page he turned, read much, thought
much,
And with old bards of honourable name
Measured his soul severely ; and looked up
To fame, ambitious of no second place.
Hope grew from inward faith, and promised fair.
And out before him opened many a path
Ascending, where the laurel highest waved
Her branch of endless green. He stood admiring ;
But stood, admired, not long. The harp he seized,
The harp he loved, loved better than his life,
The harp which uttered deepest notes, and held
The ear of thought a captive to its song.
He searched, and meditated much, and whiles,
With rapturous hand, in secret touched the lyre,
Aiming at glorious strains ; and searched again
For theme deserving of immortal verse ;
Chose now, and now refused, unsatisfied ;
Pleased, then displeased, and hesitating still.

Thus stood his mind, when round him came a cloud.
Slowly and heavily it came, a cloud
Of ills we mention not : enough to say,
'Twas cold, and dead, impenetrable gloom.
He saw its dark approach, and saw his hopes,
One after one, put out, as nearer still
It drew his soul ; but fainted not at first,
Fainted not soon. He knew the lot of man
Was trouble, and prepared to bear the worst ;
Endure whate'er should come, without a sigh
Endure, and drink, even to the very dregs,
The bitterest cup that Time could measure out ;
And, having done, look up, and ask for more.

He called Philosophy, and with his heart
Reasoned. He called Religion, too, but called
Reluctantly, and therefore was not heard.
Ashamed to be o'ermatched by earthly woes,
He sought, and sought with eye that dimmed apace,
To find some avenue to light, some place
On which to rest a hope ; but sought in vain.
Darker and darker still the darkness grew.
At length he sank ; and Disappointment stood
His only comforter, and mournfully
Told all was past. His interest in life,
In being, ceased ; and now he seemed to feel,
And shuddered as he felt, his powers of mind
Decaying in the spring-time of his day.
The vigorous weak became ; the clear, obscure ;
Memory gave up her charge ; Decision reeled ;
And from her flight Fancy returned, returned
Because she found no nourishment abroad.
The blue heavens withered ; and the moon and
sun,
And all the stars, and the green earth, and morn
And evening withered ; and the eyes, and smiles,
And faces of all men and women, withered,
Withered to him ; and all the universe,
Like something which had been, appeared, but now
Was dead, and mouldering fast away. He tried
No more to hope, wished to forget his vow,
Wished to forget his harp ; then ceased to wish.
That was his last ; enjoyment now was done.
He had no hope, no wish, and scarce a fear.
Of being sensible, and sensible
Of loss, he as some atom seemed, which God
Had made superfluously, and needed not
To build creation with ; but back again

To nothing threw, and left it in the void,
With everlasting sense that once it was.

Oh! who can tell what days, what nights he spent,
Of tideless, waveless, sailless, shoreless woe!
And who can tell how many, glorious once,
To others and themselves of promise full,
Conducted to this pass of human thought,
This wilderness of intellectual death,
Wasted and pined, and vanished from the earth,
Leaving no vestige of memorial there!

It was not so with him. When thus he lay,
Forlorn of heart, withered and desolate,
As leaf of autumn, which the wolfish winds,
Selecting from its fallen sisters, chase,
Far from its native grove, to lifeless wastes,
And leave it there alone, to be forgotten
Eternally, God passed in mercy by—
His praise be ever new!—and on him breathed,
And bade him live, and put into his hands
A holy harp, into his lips a song,
That rolled its numbers down the tide of Time.
Ambitious now but little to be praised
Of men alone; ambitious most to be
Approved of God, the Judge of all; and have
His name recorded in the Book of Life.

Such things were Disappointment and Remorse;
And oft united both, as friends severe,
To teach men wisdom; but the fool, untaught,
Was foolish still. His ear he stopped, his eyes
He shut, and blindly, deafly obstinate,
Forced desperately his way from woe to woe.

One place, one only place, there was on earth,
Where no man e'er was fool, however mad.
"Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die."
Ah! 'twas a truth most true; and sung in Time,
And to the sons of men, by one well known
On earth for lofty verse and lofty sense.
Much hast thou seen, fair youth, much heard; but thou
Hast never seen a deathbed, never heard
A dying groan: men saw it often. 'Twas sad,
To all most sorrowful and sad; to guilt,
'Twas anguish, terror, darkness without bow
But, oh! it had a most convincing tongue,
A potent oratory, that secured
Most mute attention! and it spoke the truth
So boldly, plainly, perfectly distinct,
That none the meaning could mistake or doubt;
And had withal a disenchanting power,
A most omnipotent and wondrous power,
Which in a moment broke, for ever broke,
And utterly dissolved the charms, and spells,
And cunning sorceries of earth and hell.
And thus it spoke to him who ghastly lay,
And struggled for another breath:—Earth's cup
Is poisoned; her renown, most infamous;
Her gold, seem as it may, is really dust;
Her titles, slanderous names; her praise, reproach;
Her strength, an idiot's boast; her wisdom, blind;
Her gain, eternal loss; her hope, a dream;
Her love, her friendship, enmity with God;
Her promises, a lie; her smile, a harlot's;
Her beauty, paint, and rotten within; her pleasures,
Deadly assassins masked; her laughter, grief;
Her breasts, the sting of Death; her total sum,
Her all, most utter vanity, and all

Her lovers mad, insane most grievously,
And most insane because they know it not.

Thus did the mighty reasoner, Death, declare,
And volumes more ; and in one word confirmed
The Bible whole, Eternity is all.
But few spectators, few believed, of those
Who stayed behind. The wisest, best of men,
Believed not to the letter full ; but turned,
And on the world looked forth, as if they thought
The well-trimmed hypocrite had something still
Of inward worth. The dying man alone
Gave faithful audience, and the words of Death
To the last jot believed, believed and felt ;
But oft, alas ! believed and felt too late.

And had Earth, then, no joys, no native sweets,
No happiness, that one who spoke the truth
Might call her own ? She had ; true, native sweets,
Indigenous delights, which up the tree
Of holiness, embracing as they grew,
Ascended, and bore fruit of heavenly taste ;
In pleasant memory held, and talked of oft,
By yonder saints who walk the golden streets
Of New Jerusalem, and compass round
The Throne, with nearest vision blessed. Of these,
Hereafter, thou shalt hear, delighted hear ;
One page of beauty in the life of man.

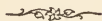
THE COURSE OF TIME

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT.

One prominent human passion, the lust of power—The many forms and names it assumes—Tyranny—Anarchy.—Struggles which gave birth to liberty in Britain.—Earthly liberty—Its real character and objects.—Slavery denounced—Only exceeded in wickedness by persecution.—The false-named freedom of Greece and Rome—Prejudices of statesmen, historians, philosophers, and poets on this point—Pagan freedom only truly described by the Prophet.—True Christian liberty—Its blessed effects—The true freeman.—A renewed human heart unfolded—Its passions and capacities—Its struggling and contradictory principles and qualities—The scene of conflict between the powers of Good and Evil.—Afflictions and trials to which the Christian was liable on earth.—His growth in holiness.—Virtue perfect in God only.—Impossibility of fallen man gaining Heaven by his own holiness.—The Redeemed beheld around the Throne.—Hymn to Divine Love.—The Bard reverts to the affairs of Time.—Books of Earth—The Novelist and Novels—Books that endured.—Vanity of human speculations on the mysteries of God.—Sin and presumption of men in censuring the ways of Providence—The mysteries of the Christian faith—Reason unable to comprehend these hidden things of God.—The unequal distribution of worldly goods, a mystery of Providence.—The high-born luxurious man contrasted with the beggar—Lessons taught by the disparity of fortune.—The difference of mental gifts.—The man of weak intellect—The man of powerful understanding.—Important lesson drawn from the difference of intellectual endowments.—Reflections on the wisdom and goodness of God in the measure and distribution of His best gifts.—An illustrious poet of Earth—The lofty powers and tendencies of his genius—His fame—His fate—Reflections drawn from his character and history.

THE COURSE OF TIME.



BOOK IV.

THE world had much of strange and wonderful:
In passion much, in action, reason, will,
And much in Providence, which still retired
From human eye, and led Philosophy,
That ill her ignorance liked to own, through dark
And dangerous paths of speculation wild.
Some striking features, as we pass, we mark,
In order such as memory suggests.

One passion prominent appears—the lust
Of power, which oftentimes took the fairer name
Of liberty, and hung the popular flag
Of freedom out. Many, indeed, its names.
When on the throne it sat, and round the neck
Of millions riveted its iron chain,
And on the shoulders of the people laid
Burdens unmerciful, it title took
Of tyranny, oppression, despotism;
And every tongue was weary cursing it.

When in the multitude it gathered strength,
And, like an ocean bursting from its bounds,
Long beat in vain, went forth resistlessly,
It bore the stamp and designation, then,
Of popular fury, anarchy, rebellion ;
And honest men bewailed all order void,
All laws annulled, all property destroyed,
The venerable murdered in the streets,
The wise despised, streams red with human blood,
Harvests beneath the frantic foot trod down,
Lands desolate, and famine at the door.

These are a part ; but other names it had,
Innumerable as the shapes and robes it wore.
But under every name, in nature still
Invariably the same, and always bad.
We own, indeed, that oft against itself
It fought, and sceptre both and people gave
An equal aid ; as long exemplified
In Albion's isle, Albion, queen of the seas ;
And in the struggle, something like a kind
Of civil liberty grew up, the best
Of mere terrestrial root ; but sickly, too,
And living only, strange to tell ! in strife
Of factions equally contending ; dead,
That very moment dead that one prevailed.

Conflicting cruelly against itself,
By its own hand it fell ; part slaying part.
And men, who noticed not the suicide,
Stood wondering much, why earth, from age to age,
Was still enslaved ; and erring causes gave.

This was earth's liberty, its nature this,

However named, in whomsoever found—
And found it was in all of woman born—
Each man to make all subject to his will ;
To make them do, undo, eat, drink, stand, move,
Talk, think, and feel, exactly as he chose.
Hence the eternal strife of brotherhoods,
Of individuals, families, commonwealths.
The root from which it grew was pride ; bad root,
And bad the fruit it bore. Then wonder not
That long the nations from it richly reaped
Oppression, slavery, tyranny, and war ;
Confusion, desolation, trouble, shame.
And, marvellous though it seem, this monster, when
It took the name of slavery, as oft
It did, had advocates to plead its cause ;
Beings that walked erect, and spoke like men ;
Of Christian parentage descended, too,
And dipped in the baptismal font, as sign
Of dedication to the Prince who bowed
To death to set the sin-bound prisoner free.

Unchristian thought ! on what pretence soe'er
Of right inherited, or else acquired ;
Of loss, or profit, or what plea you name,
To buy and sell, to barter, whip, and hold
In chains, a being of celestial make ;
Of kindred form, of kindred faculties,
Of kindred feelings, passions, thoughts, desires ;
Born free, and heir of an immortal hope.
Thought villanous, absurd, detestable !
Unworthy to be harboured in a fiend !
And only overreached in wickedness
By that, birth too of earthly liberty,
Which aimed to make a reasonable man

By legislation think, and by the sword
Believe. This was that liberty renowned,
Those equal rights of Greece and Rome, where men,
All but a few, were bought, and sold, and scourged,
And killed, as interest or caprice enjoined ;
In aftertimes talked of, written of, so much,
That most, by sound and custom led away,
Believed the essence answered to the name.
Historians on this theme were long and warm ;
Statesmen, drunk with the fumes of vain debate,
In lofty swelling phrase, called it perfection ;
Philosophers its rise, advance, and fall,
Traced carefully ; and poets kindled still,
As memory brought it up ; their lips were touched
With fire, and uttered words that men adored.
Even he, true bard of Zion, holy man !
To whom the Bible taught this precious verse—
“ He is the freeman whom the truth makes free ”—
By fashion, though by fashion little swayed,
Scarce kept his harp from pagan freedom’s praise.

The captive prophet, whom Jehovah gave
The future years, described it best, when he
Beheld it rise in vision of the night ;
A dreadful beast, and terrible, and strong
Exceedingly, with mighty iron teeth ;
And, lo, it brake in pieces, and devoured,
And stamped the residue beneath its feet !

True liberty was Christian, sanctified,
Baptised, and found in Christian hearts alone ;
First-born of Virtue ! daughter of the skies !
Nursling of truth divine ! sister of all
The graces, meekness, holiness, and love !

Giving to God, and man, and all below,
That symptom showed of sensible existence,
Their due, unasked ; fear to whom fear was due ;
To all, respect, benevolence, and love :
Companion of religion ! where she came,
There freedom came ; where dwelt, there freedom dwelt ;
Ruled where she ruled, expired where she expired.

“ He was the freeman whom the truth made free ; ”
Who, first of all, the bands of Satan broke ;
Who broke the bands of sin ; and for his soul,
In spite of fools, consulted seriously ;
In spite of fashion, persevered in good ;
In spite of wealth or poverty, upright ;
Who did as reason, not as fancy bade ;
Who heard temptation sing, and yet turned not
Aside ; saw sin bedeck her flowery bed,
And yet would not go up ; felt at his heart
The sword unsheathed, yet would not sell the truth ;
Who, having power, had not the will to hurt ;
Who blushed alike to be, or have a slave ;
Who blushed at nought but sin, feared nought but God ;
Who, finally, in strong integrity
Of soul, midst want, or riches, or disgrace,
Uplifted, calmly sat, and heard the waves
Of stormy folly breaking at his feet,
Now shrill with praise, now hoarse with foul reproach,
And both despised sincerely ; seeking this
Alone, the approbation of his God,
Which still with conscience witnessed to his peace.

This, this is freedom, such as angels use,
And kindred to the liberty of God.
First-born of Virtue ! daughter of the skies !

The man, the state, in whom she ruled, was free ;
All else were slaves of Satan, Sin, and Death.

Already thou hast something heard of good
And ill, of vice and virtue, perfect each ;
Of those redeemed, or else abandoned quite ;
And more shalt hear, when at the Judgment Day
The characters of mankind we review.
Seems aught which thou hast heard astonishing ?
A greater wonder now thy audience asks ;
Phenomenon in all the universe
Of moral being most anomalous,
Inexplicable most, and wonderful.
I'll introduce thee to a single heart,
A human heart. We enter not the worst,
But one by God's renewing Spirit touched,
A Christian heart, awaked from sleep of sin.
What see'st thou here ? what mark'st ? observe it well :
Will, passion, reason, hopes, fears, joy, distress,
Peace, turbulence, simplicity, deceit,
Good, ill, corruption, immortality ;
A temple of the Holy Ghost, and yet
Oft lodging fiends ; the dwelling-place of all
The heavenly virtues, charity and truth,
Humility, and holiness, and love ;
And yet the common haunt of anger, pride,
Hatred, revenge, and passions foul of lust ;
Allied to heaven, yet parleying oft with hell ;
A soldier listed in Messiah's band,
Yet giving quarter to Abaddon's troops ;
With seraphs drinking from the well of life,
And yet carousing in the cup of death ;
An heir of heaven, and walking thitherward,
Yet casting back a covetous eye on earth ;

Emblem of strength and weakness! loving now,
And now abhorring sin; indulging now,
And now repenting sore; rejoicing now,
With joy unspeakable and full of glory;
Now weeping bitterly, and clothed in dust;
A man willing to do, and doing not;
Doing, and willing not; embracing what
He hates, what most he loves abandoning;
Half saint, and sinner half; half life, half death;
Commixture strange of heaven, and earth, and hell!

What see'st thou here? what mark'st? A battle-
field;
Two banners spread, two dreadful fronts of war,
In shock of opposition fierce engaged.
God, angels, saw whole empires rise in arms,
Saw kings exalted, heard them tumbled down,
And others raised,—and heeded not: but here,
God, angels, looked; God, angels, fought; and Hell,
With all his legions, fought; here error fought
With truth, with darkness light, and life with death;
And here, not kingdoms, reputations, worlds,
Were won; the strife was for eternity,
The victory was never-ending bliss,
The badge, a chaplet from the tree of life.

While thus, within, contending armies strove,
Without, the Christian had his troubles too;
For, as by God's unalterable laws,
And ceremonial of the heaven of heavens,
Virtue takes place of all, and worthiest deeds
Sit highest at the feast of bliss; on earth,
The opposite was fashion's rule polite.
Virtue the lowest place at table took,

Or served, or was shut out ; the Christian still
Was mocked, derided, persecuted, slain ;
And slander, worse than mockery, or sword,
Or death, stood nightly by her horrid forge,
And fabricated lies to stain his name,
And wound his peace ; but still he had a source
Of happiness, that man could neither give
Nor take away. The avenues that led
To immortality before him lay ;
He saw, with faith's far-reaching eye, the fount
Of life, his Father's house, his Saviour God,
And borrowed thence to help his present want.

Encountered thus with enemies, without,
Within, like bark that meets opposing winds
And floods, this way, now that, she steers athwart,
Tossed by the wave, and driven by the storm ;
But still the pilot, ancient at the helm,
The harbour keeps in eye ; and after much
Of danger past, and many a prayer rude,
He runs her safely in : so was the man
Of God beset, so tossed by adverse winds ;
And so his eye upon the land of life
He kept. Virtue grew daily stronger, sin
Decayed ; his enemies, repulsed, retired ;
Till, at the stature of a perfect man
In Christ arrived, and with the Spirit filled,
He gained the harbour of eternal rest.

But think not virtue, else than dwells in God
Essentially, was perfect, without spot.
Examine yonder suns. At distance seen,
How bright they burn ! how gloriously they shine,
Mantling the worlds around in beamy light !



*"The Christian still
Was mocked, derided, persecuted."*

But, nearer viewed, we through their lustre see
Some dark behind ; so virtue was on earth,
So is in heaven, and so shall always be.
Though good it seem, immaculate, and fair
Exceedingly, to saint or angel's gaze,
The uncreated Eye, that searches all,
Sees it imperfect ; sees, but blames not ; sees,
Well pleased, and best with those who deepest dive
Into themselves, and know themselves the most ;
Taught thence in humbler reverence to bow
Before the Holy One ; and oftener view
His excellence, that in them still may rise,
And grow His likeness, growing evermore.

Nor think that any, born of Adam's race,
In his own proper virtue entered heaven.
Once fallen from God and perfect holiness,
No being, unassisted, e'er could rise,
Or sanctify the sin-polluted soul.
Oft was the trial made, but vainly made.
So oft as men, in earth's best livery clad,
However fair, approached the gates of heaven,
And stood presented to the eye of God,
Their impious pride so oft His soul abhorred.
Vain hope ! in patchwork of terrestrial grain,
To be received into the courts above !
As vain, as towards yonder suns to soar,
On wing of waxen plumage, melting soon.

Look round, and see those numbers infinite,
That stand before the Throne, and in their hands,
Palms waving high as token of victory
For battles won. These are the sons of men
Redeemed, the ransomed of the Lamb of God.

All these, and millions more of kindred blood,
Who now are out on messages of love,
All these, their virtue, beauty, excellence,
And joy, are purchase of redeeming blood ;
Their glory, bounty of redeeming love.

O Love divine ! Harp, lift thy voice on high !
Shout, angels ! shout aloud, ye sons of men !
And burn, my heart, with the eternal flame !
My lyre, be eloquent with endless praise !
O Love divine ! immeasurable Love !
Stooping from heaven to earth, from earth to hell,
Without beginning, endless, boundless Love !
Above all asking, giving far, to those
Who nought deserved, who nought deserved but
death !

Saving the vilest ! saving me ! O Love
Divine ! O Saviour God ! O Lamb once slain !
At thought of Thee, Thy love, Thy flowing blood,
All thoughts decay ; all things remembered fade ;
All hopes return ; all actions done by men,
Or angels, disappear, absorbed and lost ;
All fly, as from the great white throne which he,
The prophet, saw, in vision rapt, the heavens,
And earth, and sun, and moon, and starry host,
Confounded, fled, and found a place no more.

One glance of wonder, as we pass, deserve
The books of Time. Productive was the world
In many things, but most in books. Like swarms
Of locusts, which God sent to vex a land
Rebellious long, admonished long in vain,
Their numbers they poured annually on man,
From heads conceiving still. Perpetual birth !

Thou wonderest how the world contained them all?
Thy wonder stay. Like men, this was their doom:
"That dust they were, and should to dust return."
And oft their fathers, childless and bereaved,
Wept o'er their graves when they themselves were
green.

And on them fell, as fell on every age,
As on their authors fell, oblivious Night,
Which o'er the past lay darkling, heavy, still,
Impenetrable, motionless, and sad,
Having his dismal leaden plumage stirred
By no remembrancer, to show the men
Who after came what was concealed beneath.

The story-telling tribe alone outran
All calculation far, and left behind,
Lagging, the swiftest numbers. Dreadful, even
To fancy, was their never-ceasing birth;
And room had lacked, had not their life been short.
Excepting some, their definition take
Thou thus, expressed in gentle phrase, which leaves
Some truth behind: A Novel was a book
Three-volumed, and once read, and oft crammed full
Of poisonous error, blackening every page;
And oftener still, of trifling, second-hand
Remark, and old, diseased, putrid thought,
And miserable incident, at war
With nature, with itself and truth at war;
Yet charming still the greedy reader on,
Till, done, he tried to recollect his thoughts,
And nothing found but dreaming emptiness.
These, like ephemera, sprang in a day
From lean and shallow-soiled brains of sand,
And in a day expired; yet while they lived,

Tremendous, ofttimes, was the popular roar ;
And cries of—Live for ever ! struck the skies.

One kind alone remained, seen through the gloom
And sullen shadow of the past ; as lights
At intervals they shone, and brought the eye,
That backward travelled, upward, till arrived
At him, who on the hills of Midian sang
The patient man of Uz ; and from the lyre
Of angels, learned the early dawn of time.
Not light and momentary labour these,
But discipline and self-denial long,
And purpose stanch, and perseverance, asked,
And energy that inspiration seemed.
Composed of many thoughts, possessing each
Innate and underived vitality ;
Which having fitly shaped, and well arranged
In brotherly accord, they builded up,
A stately superstructure, that nor wind,
Nor wave, nor shock of falling years could move :
Majestic and indissolubly firm ;
As ranks of veteran warriors in the field,
Each by himself alone, and singly seen,
A tower of strength ; in massy phalanx knit,
And in embattled squadron rushing on,
A sea of valour, dread, invincible.

Books of this sort, or sacred or profane,
Which virtue helped, were titled, not amiss,
“The medicine of the mind ;” who read them, read
Wisdom, and was refreshed ; and on his path
Of pilgrimage with healthier step advanced.

In mind, in matter, much was difficult

To understand. But what in deepest night
Retired, inscrutable, mysterious, dark—
Was Evil ; God's decrees ; and deeds decreed,
Responsible : why God, the just and good,
Omnipotent and wise, should suffer sin
To rise : why man was free, accountable ;
Yet God foreseeing, overruling all.
Where'er the eye could turn, whatever track
Of moral thought it took, by reason's torch,
Or Scripture's led, before it still this mount
Sprang up, impervious, insurmountable,
Above the human stature rising far ;
Horizon of the mind, surrounding still
The vision of the soul with clouds and gloom.
Yet did they often attempt to scale its sides,
And gain its top. Philosophy, to climb,
With all her vigour toiled from age to age ;
From age to age, Theology, with all
Her vigour, toiled ; and vagrant Fancy toiled.
Not weak and foolish only, but the wise,
Patient, courageous, stout, sound-headed men,
Of proper discipline, of excellent wind,
And strong of intellectual limb, toiled hard :
And oft above the reach of common eye
Ascended far, and seemed well-nigh the top :
But only seemed ; for still another top
Above them rose, till, giddy grown, and mad
With gazing at these dangerous heights of God,
They tumbled down, and in their raving said
They o'er the summit saw. And some believed—
Believed a lie ; for never man on earth
That mountain crossed, or saw its farther side.
Around it lay the wreck of many a Sage,
Divine, Philosopher ; and many more

Fell daily, undeterred by millions fallen;
Each wondering why he failed to comprehend
God, and with finite measure infinite.
To pass it was no doubt desirable;
And few of any intellectual size
That did not, some time in their day, attempt;
But all in vain; for as the distant hill,
Which on the right or left, the traveller's eye
Bounds, seems advancing as he walks, and oft
He looks, and looks, and thinks to pass; but still
It forward moves, and mocks his baffled sight,
Till night descends, and wraps the scene in gloom:
So did this moral height the vision mock;
So lifted up its dark and cloudy head
Before the eye, and met it evermore.
And some, provoked, accused the righteous God;
Accused of what? Hear human boldness now!
Hear guilt, hear folly, madness, all extreme!
Accused of what? the God of truth accused
Of cruelty, injustice, wickedness.
Abundant sin! because a mortal man,
A worm, at best, of small capacity,
With scarce an atom of Jehovah's works
Before him, and with scarce an hour to look
Upon them, should presume to censure God,
The infinite and uncreated God!
To sit in judgment on Himself, His works,
His providence! and try, accuse, condemn!
If there is aught, thought or to think, absurd,
Irrational, and wicked, this is more,
This most; the sin of devils, or of those
To devils growing fast. Wise men and good
Accused themselves, not God; and put their hands
Upon their mouths, and in the dust adored.

The Christian's faith had many mysteries too.
The uncreated holy Three in One ;
Divine incarnate, human in divine ;
The inward call ; the sanctifying dew
Coming unseen, unseen departing thence ;
Anew creating all, and yet not heard ;
Compelling, yet not felt. Mysterious these ;
Not that Jehovah to conceal them wished ;
Not that religion wished. The Christian faith,
Unlike the timorous creeds of Pagan priests,
Was frank, stood forth to view, invited all
To prove, examine, search, investigate,
And gave herself a light to see her by.
Mysterious these, because too large for eye
Of man, too long for human arm to mete.

Go to yon mount which on the north side stands
Of New Jerusalem, and lifts its head
Serene in glory bright ; except the hill,
The sacred Hill of God, whereon no foot
Must tread, highest of all creation's walks,
And overlooking all, in prospect vast,
From out the ethereal blue. That cliff ascend,
Gaze thence, around thee look ; nought now impedes
Thy view ; yet still thy vision, purified
And strong although it be, a boundary meets ;
Or rather, thou wilt say, thy vision fails
To gaze throughout illimitable space,
And find the end of infinite ; and so
It was with all the mysteries of faith.
God set them forth unveiled to the full gaze
Of man, and asked him to investigate ;
But reason's eye, however purified,
And on whatever tall and goodly height

Of observation placed, to comprehend
Them fully, sought in vain. In vain seeks still ;
But wiser now and humbler, she concludes,
From what she knows already of His love
All gracious, that she cannot understand ;
And gives Him credit, reverence, praise for all.

Another feature in the ways of God,
That wondrous seemed, and made some men complain,
Was the unequal gift of worldly things.
Great was the difference, indeed, of men
Externally, from beggar to the prince.
The highest take, and lowest, and conceive
The scale between. A noble of the earth,
One of its great, in splendid mansion dwelt ;
Was robed in silk and gold, and every day
Fared sumptuously ; was titled, honoured, served.
Thousands his nod awaited, and his will
For law received. Whole provinces his march
Attended, and his chariot drew, or on
Their shoulders bore aloft the precious man.
Millions, abased, fell prostrate at his feet ;
And millions more thundered adoring praise.
As far as eye could reach, he called the land
His own, and added yearly to his fields.
Like tree that of the soil took healthy root,
He grew on every side, and towered on high,
And over half a nation, shadowing wide,
He spread his ample boughs. Air, earth, and sea,
Nature entire, the brute and rational,
To please him ministered, and vied among
Themselves who most should his desires prevent,
Watching the moving of his rising thoughts
Attentively, and hasting to fulfil.

His palace rose and kissed the gorgeous clouds.
Streams bent their music to his will, trees sprang,
The naked waste put on luxuriant robes ;
And plains of happy cottages cast out
Their tenants, and became a hunting-field.
Before him bowed the distant isles, with fruits
And spices rare ; the South her treasures brought ;
The East and West sent ; and the frigid North
Came with her offering of glossy furs.
Musicians soothed his ear with airs select ;
Beauty held out her arms ; and every man
Of cunning skill, and curious device,
And endless multitudes of liveried wights,
His pleasure waited with obsequious look.
And when the wants of nature were supplied,
And commonplace extravagances filled,
Beyond their asking ; and caprice itself,
In all its zigzag appetites gorged full,
The man new wants and new expenses planned :
Nor planned alone. Wise, learnèd, sober men,
Of cogitation deep, took up his case,
And planned for him new modes of folly wild ;
Contrived new wishes, wants, and wondrous means
Of spending with despatch ; yet, after all,
His fields extended still, his riches grew,
And what seemed splendour infinite, increased.
So lavishly upon a single man
Did Providence His bounties daily shower.

Turn now thine eye, and look on poverty ;
Look on the lowest of her ragged sons.
We find him by the way, sitting in dust ;
He has no bread to eat, no tongue to ask,
No limbs to walk, no home, no house, no friend.

Observe his goblin cheek, his wretched eye ;
See how his hand, if any hand he has,
Involuntary opens, and trembles forth,
As comes the traveller's foot ; and hear his groan,
His long and lamentable groan, announce
The want that gnaws within. Severely now
The sun scorches and burns his old bald head ;
The frost now glues him to the chilly earth.
On him hail, rain, and tempest rudely beat ;
And all the winds of heaven, in jocular mood,
Sport with his withered rags, that, tossed about,
Display his nakedness to passers-by,
And grievously burlesque the human form.
Observe him yet more narrowly. His limbs,
With palsy shaken, about him blasted lie ;
And all his flesh is full of putrid sores
And noisome wounds, his bones of racking pains.
Strange vesture this for an immortal soul !
Strange retinue to wait a lord of earth !
It seems as nature, in some surly mood,
After debate and musing long, had tried
How vile and miserable thing her hand
Could fabricate, then made this meagre man ;
A sight so full of perfect misery,
That passengers their faces turned away,
And hasted to be gone ; and delicate
And tender women took another path.

This great disparity of outward things
Taught many lessons ; but this taught in chief,
Though learned by few : That God no value set,
That man should none, on goods of worldly kind ;
On transitory, frail, external things,
Of migratory, ever-changing sort :



*“ The word philosophy he never heard,
Or science ; never heard of liberty,
Necessity, or laws of gravitation ;
And never had an unbelieving doubt.”*

And farther taught, that in the soul alone—
The thinking, reasonable, willing soul—
God placed the total excellence of man ;
And meant him evermore to seek it there.

But stranger still the distribution seemed
Of intellect, though fewer here complained ;
Each with his share, upon the whole, content.
One man there was, and many such you might
Have met, who never had a dozen thoughts
In all his life, and never changed their course ;
But told them o'er, each in its customary place,
From morn till night, from youth till hoary age.
Little above the ox which grazed the field,
His reason rose ; so weak his memory,
The name his mother called him by he scarce
Remembered ; and his judgment so untaught,
That what at evening played along the swamp,
Fantastic, clad in robe of fiery hue,
He thought the devil in disguise, and fled
With quivering heart and winged footsteps home.
The word philosophy he never heard,
Or science ; never heard of liberty,
Necessity, or laws of gravitation ;
And never had an unbelieving doubt.
Beyond his native vale he never looked ;
But thought the visual line, that girt him round,
The world's extreme ; and thought the silver
Moon,
That nightly o'er him led her virgin host,
No broader than his father's shield. He lived—
Lived where his father lived, died where he died—
Lived happy, and died happy, and was saved.
Be not surprised. He loved and served his God.

There was another, large of understanding,
Of memory infinite, of judgment deep,
Who knew all learning, and all science knew ;
And all phenomena in heaven and earth
Traced to their causes ; traced the labyrinths
Of thought, association, passion, will ;
And all the subtle, nice affinities
Of matter, traced ; its virtues, motions, laws ;
And most familiarly and deeply talked
Of mental, moral, natural, divine.
Leaving the earth at will, he soared to heaven,
And read the glorious visions of the skies ;
And to the music of the rolling spheres
Intelligently listened ; and gazed far back,
Into the awful depths of Deity ;
Did all that mind assisted most could do :
And yet in misery lived, in misery died,
Because he wanted holiness of heart.

A deeper lesson this to mortals taught,
And nearer cut the branches of their pride ;
That not in mental, but in moral worth,
God excellence placed ; and only to the good,
To virtue, granted happiness alone.

Admire the goodness of Almighty God !
He riches gave, He intellectual strength,
To few, and therefore none commands to be
Or rich, or learned ; nor promises reward
Of peace to these. On all, He moral worth
Bestowed, and moral tribute asked from all.
And who that could not pay ? who born so poor,
Of intellect so mean, as not to know
What seemed the best ; and, knowing, might not do ?

As not to know what God and conscience bade,
And what they bade, not able to obey?
And he, who acted thus, fulfilled the law
Eternal, and its promise reaped of peace;
Found peace this way alone; who sought it else,
Sought mellow grapes beneath the icy Pole,
Sought blooming roses on the cheek of death,
Sought substance in a world of fleeting shades.

Take one example, to our purpose quite.
A man of rank, and of capacious soul,
Who riches had, and fame, beyond desire;
An heir of flattery, to titles born,
And reputation, and luxurious life.
Yet, not content with ancestral name,
Or to be known because his fathers were,
He on this height hereditary stood,
And, gazing higher, purposed in his heart
To take another step. Above him seemed
Alone the mount of song, the lofty seat
Of canonised bards; and thitherward,
By nature taught, and inward melody,
In prime of youth he bent his eagle eye.
No cost was spared. What books he wished, he read;
What sage to hear, he heard; what scenes to see,
He saw. And first in rambling schoolboy days
Britannia's mountain-walks, and heath-girt lakes,
And story-telling glens, and founts, and brooks,
And maids, as dewdrops pure and fair, his soul
With grandeur filled, and melody and love.
Then travel came, and took him where he wished.
He cities saw, and courts, and princely pomp;
And mused alone on ancient mountain-brows;
And mused on battle-fields, where valour fought

In other days ; and mused on ruins grey
With years ; and drank from old and fabulous wells ;
And plucked the vine that first-born prophets plucked ;
And mused on famous tombs, and on the wave
Of ocean mused, and on the desert waste.
The heavens and earth of every country saw.
Where'er the old inspiring Genii dwelt,
Aught that could rouse, expand, refine the soul,
Thither he went, and meditated there.
He touched his harp, and nations heard, entranced.
As some vast river of unfailing source,
Rapid, exhaustless, deep, his numbers flowed,
And opened new fountains in the human heart.
Where Fancy halted, weary in her flight,
In other men, his, fresh as morning, rose,
And soared untrodden heights, and seemed at home
Where angels bashful looked. Others, though great,
Beneath their argument seemed struggling whiles ;
He, from above descending, stooped to touch
The loftiest thought ; and proudly stooped, as though
It scarce deserved his verse. With Nature's self
He seemed an old acquaintance, free to jest
At will with all her glorious majesty.
He laid his hand upon "the Ocean's mane,"
And played familiar with his hoary locks ;
Stood on the Alps, stood on the Apennines,
And with the thunder talked, as friend to friend ;
And wove his garland of the lightning's wing,
In sportive twist, the lightning's fiery wing,
Which, as the footsteps of the dreadful God,
Marching upon the storm in vengeance, seemed :
Then turned, and with the grasshopper, who sang
His evening song beneath his feet, conversed.
Suns, moons, and stars, and clouds, his sisters were ;

Rocks, mountains, meteors, seas, and winds, and storms,
His brothers, younger brothers, whom he scarce
As equals deemed. All passions of all men,
The wild and tame, the gentle and severe;
All thoughts, all maxims, sacred and profane;
All creeds, all seasons, Time, Eternity;
All that was hated, and all that was dear;
All that was hoped, all that was feared, by man,
He tossed about, as tempest, withered leaves;
Then, smiling, looked upon the wreck he made.
With terror now he froze the cowering blood,
And now dissolved the heart in tenderness:
Yet would not tremble, would not weep himself;
But back into his soul retired, alone,
Dark, sullen, proud, gazing contemptuously
On hearts and passions prostrate at his feet.
So Ocean from the plains, his waves had late
To desolation swept, retired in pride,
Exulting in the glory of his might,
And seemed to mock the ruin he had wrought.

As some fierce comet of tremendous size,
To which the stars did reverence as it passed,
So he, through learning and through fancy, took
His flights sublime, and on the loftiest top
Of Fame's dread mountain sat; not soiled and worn,
As if he from the earth had laboured up;
But as some bird of heavenly plumage fair
He looked, which down from higher regions came,
And perched it there to see what lay beneath.

The nations gazed, and wondered much, and praised.
Critics before him fell in humble plight,
Confounded fell, and made debasing signs

To catch his eye ; and stretched and swelled themselves
To bursting nigh, to utter bulky words
Of admiration vast ; and many, too,
Many that aimed to imitate his flight,
With weaker wing unearthly fluttering made,
And gave abundant sport to after days.

Great man ! the nations gazed, and wondered much,
And praised ; and many called his evil good.
Wits wrote in favour of his wickedness ;
And kings to do him honour took delight.
Thus, full of titles, flattery, honour, fame,
Beyond desire, beyond ambition, full,
He died—he died of what ?—of wretchedness ;
Drank every cup of joy, heard every trump
Of fame, drank early, deeply drank, drank draughts
That common millions might have quenched ; then
died
Of thirst, because there was no more to drink.
His goddess, Nature, wooed, embraced, enjoyed,
Fell from his arms abhorred ; his passions died ;
Died all but dreary, solitary pride ;
And all his sympathies in being died.
As some ill-guided bark, well built and tall,
Which angry tides cast out on desert shore,
And then retiring, left it there to rot
And moulder in the winds and rains of heaven ;
So he, cut from the sympathies of life,
And cast ashore from pleasure's boisterous surge,
A wandering, weary, worn, and wretched thing,
A scorched, and desolate, and blasted soul,
A gloomy wilderness of dying thought—
Repined, and groaned, and withered from the earth.
His groanings filled the land his numbers filled ;

And yet he seemed ashamed to groan. Poor man!
Ashamed to ask, and yet he needed help.

Proof this, beyond all lingering of doubt,
That not with natural or mental wealth
Was God delighted, or his peace secured;
That not in natural or mental wealth
Was human happiness or grandeur found.
Attempt how monstrous, and how surely vain,
With things of earthly sort, with aught but God,
With aught but moral excellence, truth, and love,
To satisfy and fill the immortal soul!
Attempt, vain inconceivably! attempt,
To satisfy the ocean with a drop,
To marry Immortality to Death,
And with the unsubstantial shade of Time
To fill the embrace of all Eternity!

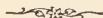
THE COURSE OF TIME .

BOOK V.

ARGUMENT.

Every class of immortal beings called to praise God—chiefly the redeemed.—The irretrievable nature of the deeds done in Time.—Apostrophe to the remembrances of childhood—to the loves, pleasures, and delights of Earth.—Its innocent pleasures and joys recounted—Whether its cup contained most of sweet or sour—Nature requiring little, not necessarily condemned to lament and suffer.—The dwelling of Happiness assigned by poets and others to rural solitude—The heart her true seat: Who were her companions.—The morning of life described—The delights that attended the early exercise of the reason and senses of man.—The bliss attending maternal feelings—The mother and her group of little ones.—Habits and fascinations of childhood.—Love apostrophised.—A scene of early love.—The delights of the faithful friendships of Earth.—The lonely walks of meditation.—Enjoyment of the solitary bard in communion with his own mind—and in the exercise of imagination and intellect.—The sources of innocent enjoyment copious and diversified—Found even in trifles.—The delights afforded by the change of seasons, and the varieties of natural scenery.—The native landscape of the Bard of Earth, as beheld from his father's house.—Enough on Earth to excite the affections and give felicity to human beings of every age and class.—Freaks of fancy in dreams.—The moral influences of some dreams.—Joys peculiar to earth alone—The joy which sprang from pain and misery escaped or surmounted.—The Widow—Her desolation—Her haunts—Brightness of her final hope.—A Mother dying in childhood.—The righteous had purer and more exquisite enjoyments on Earth than the wicked.—Evil state of society that preceded the Millennium—Tyranny of Kings and Priests—Persecution and humiliation of the Church—The Romish superstition.—Signs of approaching change—Great battle of the saints and angels with the powers of Earth and Darkness—Triumph of the saints.—Angel of the Proclamation.—State of the righteous and the wicked contrasted.—The universal happiness of Earth in this Sabbath of Time.—Exaltation of the Church.—All tribes of Earth worshippers in Zion.—Enumeration of the nations.—Peace and gentleness of the inferior animals, and beauty and fertility of the Earth, during the Millennium.

THE COURSE OF TIME.



BOOK V.

PRAISE God, ye servants of the Lord! praise God,
Ye angels strong! praise God, ye sons of men!
Praise Him who made, and who redeemed your souls,
Who gave you hope, reflection, reason, will;
Minds that can pierce eternity remote,
And live at once on future, present, past:
Can speculate on systems yet to make,
And back recoil on ancient days of Time:
Of Time soon past, soon lost among the shades
Of buried years. Not so the actions done
In Time, the deeds of reasonable men:
As if engraven with pen of iron grain,
And laid in flinty rock, they stand unchanged,
Written on the various pages of the past;
If good, in rosy characters of love;
If bad, in letters of vindictive fire.

God may forgive, but cannot blot them out.
Systems begin and end, Eternity

Rolls on his endless years, and men, absolved
By mercy from the consequence, forget
The evil deed, and God imputes it not;
But neither systems ending nor begun,
Eternity, that rolls his endless years,
Nor men absolved, and sanctified, and washed,
By mercy from the consequence, nor yet
Forgetfulness, nor God imputing not,
Can wash the guilty deed, once done, from out
The faithful annals of the past: who reads,
And many read, there finds it as it was,
And is, and shall for ever be—a dark,
Unnatural, and loathly moral spot.

The span of time was short, indeed; and now
Three-fourths were past, the last begun, and on
Careering to its close, which soon we sing,
But first our promise we redeem, to tell
The joys of Time, her joys of native growth;
And briefly must, what longer tale deserves.

Wake, dear remembrances! wake, childhood days!
Loves, friendships, wake! and wake, thou morn and
even!
Sun! with thy orient locks, night, moon, and stars!
And thou, celestial bow, and all ye woods,
And hills and vales, first trod in dawning life,
And hours of holy musing, wake! wake, Earth!
And smiling, to remembrance come, and bring,
For thou canst bring, meet argument for song
Of heavenly harp, meet hearing for the ear
Of heavenly auditor, exalted high.

God gave much peace on earth—much holy joy;

Opened fountains of perennial spring, whence flowed
Abundant happiness to all who wished
To drink, not perfect bliss ; that dwells with us,
Beneath the eyelids of the Eternal One,
And sits at His right hand alone ; but such
As well deserved the name, abundant joy ;
Pleasures on which the memory of saints
Of highest glory still delights to dwell.

It was, we own, subject of much debate,
And worthy men stood on opposing sides,
Whether the cup of mortal life had more
Of sour or sweet. Vain question this, when asked
In general terms, and worthy to be left
Unsolved. If most was sour, the drinker, not
The cup, we blame. Each in himself the means
Possessed to turn the bitter sweet, the sweet
To bitter. Hence, from out the self-same fount,
One nectar drank, another draughts of gall.
Hence, from the self-same quarter of the sky,
One saw ten thousand angels look and smile ;
Another saw as many demons frown.
One discord heard, where harmony inclined
Another's ear. The sweet was in the taste,
The beauty in the eye, and in the ear
The melody ; and in the man—for God
Necessity of sinning laid on none—
To form the taste, to purify the eye,
And tune the ear, that all he tasted, saw,
Or heard, might be harmonious, sweet, and fair.
Who would, might groan ; who would, might sing for
joy.

Nature lamented little. Undevoured

By spurious appetites, she found enough
Where least was found ; with gleanings satisfied,
Or crumbs, that from the hand of luxury fell ;
Yet seldom these she ate, but ate the bread
Of her own industry, made sweet by toil ;
And walked in robes that her own hands had spun ;
And slept on down her early rising bought.
Frugal and diligent in business, chaste
And abstinent, she stored for helpless age,
And, keeping in reserve her spring-day health,
And dawning relishes of life, she drank
Her evening cup with excellent appetite ;
And saw her eldest sun decline, as fair
As rose her earliest morn, and pleased as well.

Whether in crowds or solitudes, in streets
Or shady groves, dwelt Happiness, it seems
In vain to ask—her nature makes it vain ;
Though poets much, and hermits, talked and sang
Of brooks, and crystal founts, and weeping dews,
And myrtle bowers, and solitary vales,
And with the nymph made assignations there,
And wooed her with the love-sick oaten reed ;
And sages too, although less positive,
Advised their sons to court her in the shade.
Delirious babble all ! Was happiness,
Was self-approving, God-approving joy,
In drops of dew, however pure ? in gales,
However sweet ? in wells, however clear ?
Or groves, however thick with verdant shade ?

True, these were of themselves exceeding fair,
How fair at morn and even ! worthy the walk
Of loftiest mind, and gave, when all within

Was right, a feast of overflowing bliss,
But were the occasion, not the cause of joy.
They waked the native fountains of the soul
Which slept before ; and stirred the holy tides
Of feeling up, giving the heart to drink,
From its own treasures, draughts of perfect sweet.

The Christian faith, which better knew the heart
Of man, him thither sent for peace, and thus
Declared : Who finds it, let him find it there ;
Who finds it not, for ever let him seek
In vain—'tis God's most holy, changeless will.

True Happiness had no localities,
No tones provincial, no peculiar garb.
Where Duty went, she went ; with Justice went,
And went with Meekness, Charity, and Love.
Where'er a tear was dried, a wounded heart
Bound up, a bruised spirit with the dew
Of sympathy anointed, or a pang
Of honest suffering soothed, or injury
Repeated oft, as oft by love forgiven ;
Where'er an evil passion was subdued
Or Virtue's feeble embers fanned ; where'er
A sin was heartily abjured and left ;
Where'er a pious act was done, or breathed
A pious prayer, or wished a pious wish ;
There was a high and holy place, a spot
Of sacred light, a most religious fane,
Where Happiness, descending, sat and smiled.

But these apart. In sacred memory lives
The morn of life, first morn of endless days,
Most joyful morn ! nor yet for nought the joy.

A being of eternal date commenced,
A young immortal then was born ! and who
Shall tell what strange variety of bliss
Burst on the infant soul, when first it looked
Abroad on God's creation fair, and saw
The glorious earth, and glorious heaven, and face
Of man sublime ! and saw all new, and felt
All new ! when thought awoke, thought never more
To sleep ! when first it saw, heard, reasoned, willed,
And triumphed in the warmth of conscious life !

Nor happy only, but the cause of joy,
Which those who never tasted always mourned.
What tongue !—no tongue, shall tell what bliss o'er-
flowed

The mother's tender heart, while round her hung
The offspring of her love, and lisped her name ;
As living jewels dropped unstained from heaven,
That made her fairer far, and sweeter seem,
Than every ornament of costliest hue :
And who hath not been ravished, as she passed
With all her playful band of little ones,
Like Luna, with her daughters of the sky,
Walking in matron majesty and grace ?
All who had hearts, here pleasure found : and oft
Have I, when tired with heavy task, for tasks
Were heavy in the world below, relaxed
My weary thoughts among their guiltless sports,
And led them by their little hands afield,
And watched them run and crop the tempting
flower,—

Which oft, unasked, they brought me, and bestowed
With smiling face, that waited for a look
Of praise,—and answered curious questions, put



*“And who hath not been ravished, as she passed
With all her playful band of little ones,
Like Luna, with her daughters of the sky,
Walking in matron majesty and grace?”*

In much simplicity, but ill to solve :
And heard their observations strange and new ;
And settled whiles their little quarrels, soon
Ending in peace, and soon forgot in love.
And still I looked upon their loveliness,
And sought through nature for similitudes
Of perfect beauty, innocence, and bliss ;
And fairest imagery around me thronged :
Dewdrops at day-spring on a seraph's locks,
Roses that bathe about the well of life,
Young Loves, young Hopes, dancing on Morning's
 cheek,
Gems leaping in the coronet of Love !
So beautiful, so full of life, they seemed
As made entire of beams of angels' eyes.
Gay, guileless, sportive, lovely little things !
Playing around the den of Sorrow, clad
In smiles, believing in their fairy hopes,
And thinking man and woman true ! all joy,
Happy all day, and happy all the night !

Hail, holy Love ! thou word that sums all bliss,
Gives and receives all bliss, fullest when most
Thou givest ! spring-head of all felicity,
Deepest when most is drawn ! emblem of God !
O'erflowing most when greatest numbers drink !
Essence that binds the uncreated Three,
Chain that unites creation to its Lord,
Centre to which all being gravitates,
Eternal, ever-growing, happy Love !
Enduring all, hoping, forgiving all ;
Instead of law, fulfilling every law ;
Entirely blest, because thou seek'st no more,
Hoped not, nor fear'st ; but on the present liv'st,

And hold'st perfection smiling in thy arms.
Mysterious, infinite, exhaustless Love!
On earth mysterious, and mysterious still
In heaven; sweet chord, that harmonises all
The harps of Paradise! the spring, the well,
That fills the bowl and banquet of the sky!

But why should I to thee of love divine?
Who happy, and not eloquent of Love?
Who holy, and, as thou art, pure, and not
A temple where her glory ever dwells,
Where burn her fires, and beams her perfect eye?

Kindred to this, part of this holy flame,
Was youthful love—the sweetest boon of Earth.
Hail, Love! first Love, thou word that sums all bliss!
The sparkling cream of all Time's blessedness,
The silken down of happiness complete!
Discerner of the ripest grapes of joy,
She gathered and selected with her hand,
All finest relishes, all fairest sights,
All rarest odours, all divinest sounds,
All thoughts, all feelings dearest to the soul;
And brought the holy mixture home, and filled
The heart with all superlatives of bliss.
But who would that expound, which words transcends,
Must talk in vain. Behold a meeting-scene
Of early love, and thence infer its worth.

It was an eve of Autumn's holiest mood;
The corn-fields, bathed in Cynthia's silver light,
Stood ready for the reaper's gathering hand,
And all the winds slept soundly. Nature seemed,
In silent contemplation, to adore



*"It was an eve of Autumn's holiest mood ;
The corn-fields, bathed in Cynthia's silver light,
Stood ready for the reaper's gathering hand,
And all the winds slept soundly."*

Its Maker. Now and then, the agèd leaf
Fell from its fellows, rustling to the ground ;
And, as it fell, bade man think on his end.
On vale and lake, on wood and mountain high,
With pensive wing outspread, sat heavenly Thought,
Conversing with itself. Vesper looked forth,
From out her western hermitage, and smiled ;
And up the east, unclouded, rode the Moon
With all her stars, gazing on earth intense,
As if she saw some wonder walking there.

Such was the night, so lovely, still, serene,
When, by a hermit thorn that on the hill
Had seen a hundred flowery ages pass,
A damsel kneeled to offer up her prayer,
Her prayer nightly offered, nightly heard.
This ancient thorn had been the meeting-place
Of love, before his country's voice had called
The ardent youth to fields of honour, far
Beyond the wave : and hither now repaired,
Nightly, the maid, by God's all-seeing eye
Seen only, while she sought this boon alone—
Her lover's safety and his quick return.
In holy humble attitude she kneeled,
And to her bosom, fair as moonbeam, pressed
One hand, the other lifted up to heaven.
Her eye, upturned, bright as the star of morn,
As violet meek, excessive ardour streamed,
Wafting away her earnest heart to God.
Her voice, scarce uttered, soft as Zephyr sighs
On morning lily's cheek, though soft and low,
Yet heard in heaven, heard at the mercy-seat.
A tear-drop wandered on her lovely face ;
It was a tear of faith and holy fear,

Pure as the drops that hang at dawning-time,
On yonder willows by the stream of life.
On her the Moon looked steadfastly ; the Stars,
That circle nightly round the eternal Throne,
Glanced down, well-pleased ; and Everlasting Love
Gave gracious audience to her prayer sincere.

O had her lover seen her thus alone,
Thus holy, wrestling thus, and all for him !
Nor did he not ; for oftentimes Providence,
With unexpected joy the fervent prayer
Of faith surprised. Returned from long delay,
With glory crowned of righteous actions won,
The sacred thorn, to memory dear, first sought
The youth, and found it at the happy hour,
Just when the damsel kneeled herself to pray.
Wrapt in devotion, pleading with her God,
She saw him not, heard not his foot approach.
All holy images seemed too impure
To emblem her he saw. A seraph kneeled,
Beseeching for his ward, before the Throne,
Seemed fittest, pleased him best. Sweet was the
thought !
But sweeter still the kind remembrance came,
That she was flesh and blood, formed for himself,
The plighted partner of his future life.
And as they met, embraced, and sat, embowered
In woody chambers of the starry night,
Spirits of love about them ministered,
And God, approving, blessed the holy joy !

Nor unremembered is the hour when friends
Met. Friends, but few on earth, and therefore dear ;
Sought oft, and sought almost as oft in vain ;

Yet always sought ; so native to the heart,
So much desired, and coveted by all.
Nor wonder thou—thou wonderest not, nor need'st !
Much beautiful, and excellent, and fair,
Was seen beneath the sun ; but nought was seen
More beautiful, or excellent, or fair,
Than face of faithful friend ; fairest when seen
In darkest day : and many sounds were sweet,
Most ravishing, and pleasant to the ear ;
But sweeter none than voice of faithful friend ;
Sweet always, sweetest, heard in loudest storm.
Some I remember, and will ne'er forget ;
My early friends, friends of my evil day ;
Friends in my mirth, friends in my misery too ;
Friends given by God in mercy and in love ;
My counsellors, my comforters, and guides ;
My joy in grief, my second bliss in joy ;
Companions of young desires ; in doubt,
My oracles ; my wings in high pursuit.
Oh ! I remember, and will ne'er forget,
Our meeting spots, our chosen, sacred hours,
Our burning words, that uttered all the soul,
Our faces beaming with unearthly love ;
Sorrow with sorrow sighing, hope with hope
Exulting, heart embracing heart entire !
As birds of social feather, helping each
His fellow's flight, we soared into the skies,
And cast the clouds beneath our feet, and Earth,
With all her tardy, leaden-footed cares ;
And talked the speech and ate the food of heaven !
These I remember, these selectest men,
And would their names record ; but what avails
My mention of their name ? Before the Throne
They stand illustrious 'mong the loudest harps,

And will receive thee glad, my friend and theirs.
For all are friends in heaven, all faithful friends ;
And many friendships, in the days of Time
Begun, are lasting here, and growing still ;
So grows ours evermore, both theirs and mine.

Nor is the hour of lonely walk forgot,
In the wide desert, where the view was large.
Pleasant were many scenes, but most to me
The solitude of vast extent, untouched
By hand of art, where Nature sowed, herself,
And reaped her crops ; whose garments were the clouds ;
Whose minstrels, brooks ; whose lamps, the moon and
stars ;
Whose organ-choir, the voice of many waters ;
Whose banquets, morning dews ; whose heroes, storms ;
Whose warriors, mighty winds ; whose lovers, flowers ;
Whose orators, the thunderbolts of God ;
Whose palaces, the everlasting hills ;
Whose ceiling, heaven's unfathomable blue ;
And from whose rocky turrets, battled high,
Prospect immense spread out on all sides round,
Lost now between the welkin and the main,
Now walled with hills that slept above the storm.

Most fit was such a place for musing men,
Happiest, sometimes, when musing without aim.
It was, indeed, a wondrous sort of bliss
The lonely bard enjoyed, when forth he walked,
Unpurposed ; stood, and knew not why ; sat down,
And knew not where ; arose, and knew not when ;
Had eyes, and saw not ; ears, and nothing heard ;
And sought—sought neither heaven nor earth—sought
nought,

Nor meant to think ; but ran, meantime, through vast
Of visionary things, fairer than aught
That was ; and saw the distant tops of thoughts,
Which men of common stature never saw,
Greater than aught that largest words could hold,
Or give idea of, to those who read.
He entered into Nature's holy place,
Her inner chamber, and beheld her face
Unveiled ; and heard unutterable things,
And incommunicable visions saw ;
Things then unutterable, and visions then
Of incommunicable glory bright ;
But by the lips of after ages formed
To words, or by their pencil pictured forth ;
Who, entering further in, beheld again,
And heard unspeakable and marvellous things,
Which other ages in their turn revealed,
And left to others, greater wonders still.

The earth abounded much in silent wastes ;
Nor yet is heaven without its solitudes,
Else incomplete in bliss, whither who will
May oft retire, and meditate alone,
Of God, redemption, holiness, and love ;
Nor needs to fear a setting sun, or haste
Him home from rainy tempest unforeseen,
Or, sighing, leave his thoughts for want of time.

But whatsoever was both good and fair,
And highest relish of enjoyment gave,
In intellectual exercise was found,
When gazing through the future, present, past,
Inspired, thought linked to thought, harmonious flowed
In poetry—the loftiest mood of mind :

Or when philosophy the reason led
Deep through the outward circumstance of things ;
And saw the master-wheels of Nature move ;
And travelled far along the endless line
Of certain and of probable ; and made
At every step some new discovery,
That gave the soul sweet sense of larger room.
High these pursuits, and sooner to be named
Deserved ; at present only named, again
To be resumed, and praised in longer verse.

Abundant and diversified above
All number, were the sources of delight ;
As infinite as were the lips that drank ;
And to the pure, all innocent and pure ;
The simplest still to wisest men the best.
One made acquaintanceship with plants and flowers,
And happy grew in telling all their names ;
One classed the quadrupeds, a third, the fowls ;
Another found in minerals his joy :
And I have seen a man, a worthy man,
In happy mood, conversing with a fly ;
And as he, through his glass made by himself,
Beheld its wondrous eye and plumage fine,
From leaping scarce he kept, for perfect joy.

And from my path I with my friend have turned,
A man of excellent mind and excellent heart,
And climbed the neighbouring hill, with arduous
step,
Fetching from distant cairn, or from the earth
Digging, with labour sore, the ponderous stone,
Which, having carried to the highest top,
We downward rolled ; and as it strove, at first,



*“Rising suns and setting suns,
And clouds that seemed like chariots of saints.”*

With obstacles that seemed to match its force,
With feeble crooked motion, to and fro
Wavering, he looked with interest most intense,
And prayed almost ; and as it gathered strength,
And straightened the current of its furious flow,
Exulting in the swiftness of its course,
And, rising now with rainbow-bound immense,
Leaped down careering o'er the subject plain,
He clapped his hands in sign of boundless bliss,
And laughed and talked, well paid for all his toil :
And when at night the story was rehearsed,
Uncommon glory kindled in his eye.

And there were, too,—Harp, lift thy voice on high,
And run in rapid numbers o'er the face
Of Nature's scenery,—and there were day
And night, and rising suns and setting suns,
And clouds that seemed like chariots of saints,
By fiery coursers drawn ; as brightly hued,
As if the glorious, bushy, golden locks
Of thousand cherubim had been shorn off,
And on the temples hung of Morn and Even :
And there were moons, and stars, and darkness streaked
With light ; and voice of tempest heard secure :
And there were seasons coming evermore,
And going still, all fair, and always new
With bloom, and fruit, and fields of hoary grain.
And there were hills of flock, and groves of song,
And flowery streams, and garden walks embowered,
Where side by side the rose and lily bloomed :
And sacred founts, wild harps, and moonlight glens,
And forests vast, fair lawns, and lonely oaks,
And little willows sipping at the brook ;
Old wizard-haunts, and dancing seats of mirth ;

Gay festive bowers, and palaces in dust ;
Dark owlet nooks, and caves, and battled rocks ;
And winding valleys, roofed with pendent shade ;
And tall and perilous cliffs, that overlooked
The breadth of ocean, sleeping on his waves ;
Sounds, sights, smells, tastes, the heaven and earth,
profuse

In endless sweets, above all praise of song :
For not to use alone did Providence
Abound, but large example gave to man
Of grace, and ornament, and splendour rich,
Snited abundantly to every taste,
In bird, beast, fish, wingèd and creeping thing,
In herb, and flower, and in the restless change
Which, on the many-coloured seasons, made
The annual circuit of the fruitful earth.

Nor do I aught of earthly sort remember,—
If partial feeling to my native place
Lead not my lyre astray,—of fairer view,
And comelier walk, than the blue mountain-paths,
And snowy cliffs of Albion renowned ;
Albion, an isle long blessed with gracious laws,
And gracious kings, and favoured much of Heaven,
Though yielding oft penurious gratitude.
Nor do I of that isle remember aught
Of prospect more sublime and beautiful
Than Scotia's northern battlement of hills,
Which first I from my father's house beheld,
At dawn of life ; beloved in memory still,
And standard still of rural imagery.
What most resembles them, the fairest seems,
And stirs the eldest sentiments of bliss ;
And pictured on the tablet of my heart,



*“Nor do I of that isle remember aught
Of prospect more sublime and beautiful
Than Scotia’s northern battlement of hills,
Which first I from my father’s house beheld,
At dawn of life.”*



Their distant shapes eternally remain,
And in my dreams their cloudy tops arise.

Much of my native scenery appears,
And presses forward to be in my song;
But must not now, for much behind awaits
Of higher note. Four trees I pass not by,
Which o'er our house their evening shadow threw,
Three ash, and one of elm. Tall trees they were,
And old, and had been old a century
Before my day. None living could say aught
About their youth; but they were goodly trees:
And oft I wondered, as I sat and thought
Beneath their summer shade, or, in the night
Of winter, heard the spirits of the wind
Howling among their boughs,—how they had grown
So high, in such a rough tempestuous place;
And when a hapless branch, torn by the blast,
Fell down, I mourned, as if a friend had fallen.

These I distinctly hold in memory still,
And all the desert scenery around.
Nor strange, that recollection there should dwell,
Where first I heard of God's redeeming love;
First felt and reasoned, loved and was beloved;
And first awoke the harp to holy song.

To hoar and green there was enough of joy.
Hopes, friendships, charities, and warm pursuit,
Gave comfortable flow to youthful blood;
And there were old remembrances of days,
When, on the glittering dews of orient life,
Shone sunshine hopes, unfailed, unperjured then;
And there were childish sports, and schoolboy feats,

And schoolboy spots, and earnest vows of love,
Uttered, when passion's boisterous tide ran high,
Sincerely uttered, though but seldom kept ;
And there were angel looks, and sacred hours
Of rapture, hours that in a moment passed,
And yet were wished to last for evermore ;
And venturous exploits, and hardy deeds,
And bargains shrewd, achieved in manhood's prime ;
And thousand recollections, gay and sweet,
Which, as the old and venerable man
Approached the grave, around him smiling flocked,
And breathed new ardour through his ebbing veins,
And touched his lips with endless eloquence,
And cheered and much refreshed his withered heart.

Indeed, each thing remembered, all but guilt,
Was pleasant, and a constant source of joy.
Nor lived the old on memory alone.
He in his children lived a second life ;
With them again took root, sprang with their hopes,
Entered into their schemes, partook their fears,
Laughed in their mirth, and in their gain grew rich.
And sometimes on the eldest cheek was seen
A smile as hearty as on face of youth,
That saw in prospect sunny hopes invite ;
Hope's Pleasures, sung to harp of sweetest note,
Harp, heard with rapture on Britannia's hills,
With rapture heard by me, in morn of life.

Nor small the joy of rest to mortal men,
Rest after labour, sleep approaching soft,
And wrapping all the weary faculties
In sweet repose. Then Fancy, unrestrained
By sense of judgment, strange confusion made,

Of future, present, past ; combining things
Unseemly, things unsociable in nature,
In most absurd communion, laughable,
Though sometimes vexing sore the slumbering soul.
Sporting at will, she, through her airy halls—
With moonbeams paved, and canopied with stars,
And tapestried with marvellous imagery,
And shapes of glory, infinitely fair,
Moving and mixing in most wondrous dance—
Fantastically walked ; but pleased so well,
That ill she liked the judgment's voice severe,
Which called her home when noisy morn awoke.
And oft she sprang beyond the bounds of Time,
On her swift pinion lifting up the souls
Of righteous men on high to God and heaven,
Where they beheld unutterable things ;
And heard the glorious music of the blest,
Circling the throne of the Eternal Three ;
And with the spirits unincarnate took
Celestial pastime on the hills of God,
Forgetful of the gloomy pass between.

Some dreams were useless, moved by turbid course
Of animal disorder ; not so all.
Deep moral lessons some impressed, that nought
Could afterwards deface : and oft in dreams,
The master passion of the soul displayed
His huge deformity, concealed by day,
Warning the sleeper to beware, awake :
And oft in dreams, the reprobate and vile,
Unpardonable sinner,—as he seemed
Toppling upon the perilous verge of hell,—
In dreadful apparition, saw before
His vision, pass the shadows of the damned ;

And saw the glare of hollow, cursèd eyes,
Spring from the skirts of the infernal night ;
And saw the souls of wicked men, new dead,
By devils hearsed into the fiery gulf ;
And heard the burning of the endless flames ;
And heard the weltering of the waves of wrath ;
And sometimes, too, before his fancy, passed
The Worm that never dies, writhing its folds
In hideous sort, and with eternal Death
Held horrid colloquy, giving the wretch
Unwelcome earnest of the woe to come.
But these we leave, as unbefitting song,
That promised happy narrative of joy.

But what of all the joys of earth was most
Of native growth, most proper to the soil,
Not elsewhere known, in worlds that never fell,
Was joy that sprang from disappointed woe,
The joy in grief, the pleasure after pain,
Fears turned to hopes, meetings expected not,
Deliverances from dangerous attitudes.
Better for worse, and best sometimes for worst,
And all the seeming ill, ending in good,—
A sort of happiness composed, which none
Has had experience of but mortal man ;
Yet not to be despised. Look back, and one
Behold, who would not give her tear for all
The smiles that dance about the cheek of Mirth.

Among the tombs she walks at noon of night
In miserable garb of widowhood.
Observe her yonder, sickly, pale, and sad,
Bending her wasted body o'er the grave
Of him who was the husband of her youth.



*“Among the tombs she walks at noon of night,
In miserable garb of widowhood.
Observe her yonder, sickly, pale, and sad,
Bending her wasted body o’er the grave
Of him who was the husband of her youth.”*

The moonbeams, trembling through these ancient yews,
That stand like ranks of mourners round the bed
Of death, fall dismally upon her face,
Her little, hollow, withered face, almost
Invisible, so worn away with woe.

The tread of hasty foot, passing so late,
Disturbs her not; nor yet the roar of mirth,
From neighbouring revelry ascending loud.
She hears, sees nought, fears nought. One thought
alone

Fills all her heart and soul: half hoping, half
Remembering, sad unutterable thought!
Uttered by silence and by tears alone.
Sweet tears! the awful language, eloquent
Of infinite affection, far too big
For words. She sheds not many now. That grass
Which springs so rankly o'er the dead has drunk
Already many showers of grief: a drop
Or two are all that now remain behind,
And from her eye, that darts strange fiery beams,
At dreary intervals, drip down her cheek,
Falling most mournfully from bone to bone.
But yet she wants not tears. That babe that hangs
Upon her breast, that babe that never saw
Its father—he was dead before its birth—
Helps her to weep, weeping before its time,
Taught sorrow by the mother's melting voice,
Repeating oft the father's sacred name.
Be not surprised at this expense of woe!
The man she mourns was all she called her own,
The music of her ear, light of her eye,
Desire of all her heart, her hope, her fear,
The element in which her passions lived,
Dead now, or dying all: nor long shall she

Visit that place of skulls. Night after night
She wears herself away. The moonbeam now,
That falls upon her unsubstantial frame,
Scarce finds obstruction ; and upon her bones,
Barren as leafless boughs in winter time,
Her infant fastens his little hands, as oft,
Forgetful, she leaves him a while unheld.
But look, she passes not away in gloom.
A light from far illumines her face, a light
That comes beyond the moon, beyond the sun—
The light of truth divine, the glorious hope
Of resurrection at the promised morn,
And meetings then which ne'er shall part again.

Indulge another note of kindred tone,
Where grief was mixed with melancholy joy.

Our sighs were numerous, and profuse our tears ;
For she we lost was lovely, and we loved
Her much. Fresh in our memory, as fresh
As yesterday, is yet the day she died.
It was an April day ; and blithely all
The youth of Nature leaped beneath the sun,
And promised glorious manhood : and our hearts
Were glad, and round them danced the lightsome
blood,

In healthy merriment, when tidings came
A child was born : and tidings came again
That she who gave it birth was sick to death.
So swift trode sorrow on the heels of joy !
We gathered round her bed, and bent our knees
In fervent supplication to the Throne
Of Mercy, and perfumed our prayers with sighs
Sincere, and penitential tears, and looks

Of self-abasement ; but we sought to stay
An angel on the earth, a spirit ripe
For heaven ; and Mercy, in her love, refused :
Most merciful, as oft, when seeming least !
Most gracious when she seemed the most to frown !
The room I well remember, and the bed
On which she lay, and all the faces, too,
That crowded dark and mournfully around.
Her father there, and mother, bending, stood ;
And down their aged cheeks fell many drops
Of bitterness. Her husband, too, was there,
And brothers, and they wept ; her sisters, too,
Did weep and sorrow, comfortless ; and I
Too wept, though not to weeping given : and all
Within the house was dolorous and sad.
This I remember well ; but better still
I do remember, and will ne'er forget,
The dying eye ! That eye alone was bright,
And brighter grew as nearer death approached :
As I have seen the gentle little flower
Look fairest in the silver beam which fell
Reflected from the thunder-cloud, that soon
Came down, and o'er the desert scattered far
And wide its loveliness. She made a sign
To bring her babe—'twas brought, and by her placed.
She looked upon its face, that neither smiled
Nor wept, nor knew who gazed upon't ; and laid
Her hand upon its little breast, and sought
For it, with look that seemed to penetrate
The heavens, unutterable blessings, such
As God to dying parents only granted,
For infants left behind them in the world.
“ God keep my child ! ” we heard her say, and heard
No more. The Angel of the Covenant

Was come, and, faithful to his promise, stood
Prepared to walk with her through death's dark vale.
And now her eyes grew bright, and brighter still,
Too bright for ours to look upon, suffused
With many tears, and closed without a clond.
They set, as sets the morning star, which goes
Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides
Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
But melts away into the light of heaven.

Loves, friendships, hopes, and dear remembrances,
The kind embracings of the heart, and hours
Of happy thought, and smiles coming to tears,
And glories of the heaven and starry cope
Above, and glories of the earth beneath,—
These were the rays that wandered through the gloom
Of mortal life; wells of the wilderness,
Redeeming features in the face of Time,
Sweet drops that made the mixed cup of Earth
A palatable draught—too bitter else.

About the joys and pleasures of the world,
This question was not seldom in debate:
Whether the righteous man or sinner had
The greatest share, and relished them the most.
Truth gives the answer thus, gives it distinct,
Nor needs to reason long: The righteous man,
For what was he denied of earthly growth,
Worthy the name of good? Truth answers, Nought.
Had he not appetites, and sense, and will?
Might he not eat, if Providence allowed,
The finest of the wheat? Might he not drink
The choicest wine? True, he was temperate;
But then, was temperance a foe to peace?

Might he not rise and clothe himself in gold ?
Ascend, and stand in palaces of kings ?
True, he was honest still, and charitable :
Were then these virtues foes to human peace ?
Might he not do exploits and gain a name ?
Most true, he trode not down a fellow's right,
Nor walked up to a throne on skulls of men :
Were justice, then, and mercy, foes to peace ?
Had he not friendships, loves, and smiles, and hopes ?
Sat not around his table sons and daughters ?
Was not his ear with music pleased ? his eye
With light ? his nostrils with perfumes ? his lips
With pleasant relishes ? Grew not his herds ?
Fell not the rains upon his meadows ? reaped
He not his harvests ? and did not his heart
Revel, at will, through all the charities
And sympathies of nature, unconfined ?
And were not these all sweetened and sanctified
By dews of holiness shed from above ?
Might he not walk through Fancy's airy halls ?
Might he not history's ample page survey ?
Might he not, finally, explore the depths
Of mental, moral, natural, divine ?
But why enumerate thus ? One word enough.
There was no joy in all created things,
No drop of sweet that turned not in the end
To sour, of which the righteous man did not
Partake ; partake, invited by the voice
Of God, his Father's voice, who gave him all
His heart's desire : and o'er the sinner still,
The Christian had this one advantage more,
That when his earthly pleasures failed—and fail
They always did to every soul of man—
He sent his hopes on high, looked up, and reached

His sickle forth, and reaped the fields of heaven,
And plucked the clusters from the vines of God.

Nor was the general aspect of the world
Always a moral waste. A time there came,
Though few believed it e'er should come; a time
Typed by the Sabbath-day recurring once
In seven, and by the year of rest indulged
Septennial to the lands on Jordan's banks;
A time foretold by Judah's bards in words
Of fire; a time, seventh part of time, and set
Before the eighth and last, the Sabbath-day
Of all the earth, when all had rest and peace.
Before its coming many to and fro
Ran, ran from various cause; by many sent
From various cause, upright and crooked both.
Some sent and ran for love of souls sincere;
And more at instance of a holy name.
With godly zeal much vanity was mixed;
And circumstance of gaudy, civil pomp;
And speeches buying praise for praise; and lists,
And endless scrolls, surcharged with modest names
That sought the public eye; and stories, told
In quackish phrase, that hurt their credit, even
When true; combined with wise and prudent means.
Much wheat, much chaff, much gold, and much
alloy;
But God wrought with the whole, wrought most with
what
To man seemed weakest means, and brought result
Of good, from good and evil both; and breathed
Into the withered nations breath and life;
The breath and life of liberty and truth,
By means of knowledge breathed into the soul.

Then was the evil day of tyranny,
Of kingly and of priestly tyranny,
That bruised the nations long. As yet, no state
Beneath the heavens had tasted freedom's wine ;
Though loud of freedom was the talk of all.
Some groaned more deeply, being heavier tasked ;
Some wrought with straw, and some without ; but all
Were slaves, or meant to be ; for rulers still
Had been of equal mind, excepting few,
Cruel, rapacious, tyrannous, and vile ;
And had with equal shoulder propped the Beast.
As yet, the Church, the holy spouse of God,
In members few, had wandered in her weeds
Of mourning: persecuted, scorned, reproached,
And buffeted, and killed ; in members few,
Though seeming many whiles ; then fewest, oft,
When seeming most. She still had hung her harp
Upon the willow-tree ; and sighed, and wept
From age to age. Satan began the war,
And all his angels, and all wicked men,
Against her fought by wile, or fierce attack,
Six thousand years ; but fought in vain. She stood
Troubled on every side, but not distressed ;
Weeping, but yet despairing not ; cast down,
But not destroyed: for she upon the palms
Of God was graven, and precious in His sight
As apple of His eye ; and, like the bush
On Midia's mountain seen, burned unconsumed ;
But to the wilderness retiring, dwelt,
Debased in sackcloth, and forlorn in tears.

As yet, had sung the scarlet-coloured Whore,
Who on the breast of civil power reposed
Her harlot head—the Church a harlot then,

When first she wedded civil power—and drank
The blood of martyred saints ; whose priests were lords,
Whose coffers held the gold of every land,
Who held the cup of all pollutions full,
Who with a double horn the people pushed,
And raised her forehead, full of blasphemy,
Above the holy God, usurping oft
Jehovah's incommunicable names.
The nations had been dark ; the Jews had pined,
Scattered without a name, beneath the curse ;
War had abounded, Satan raged unchained ;
And earth had still been black with moral gloom.

But now the cry of men oppressed went up
Before the Lord ; and to remembrance came
The tears of all his saints, their tears and groans.
Wise men had read the number of the Name ;
The prophet-years had rolled ; the time, and times,
And half a time, were now fulfilled complete ;
The seven fierce vials of the wrath of God,
Poured by seven angels strong, were shed abroad
Upon the earth, and emptied to the dregs ;
The prophecy for confirmation stood ;
And all was ready for the sword of God.

The righteous saw, and fled without delay
Into the chambers of Omnipotence.
The wicked mocked, and sought for erring cause,
To satisfy the dismal state of things ;
The public credit gone, the fear in time
Of peace, the starving want in time of wealth,
The insurrection muttering in the streets,
And pallid consternation spreading wide ;
And leagues, though holy termed, first ratified

In hell, on purpose made to underprop
Iniquity, and crush the sacred truth.

Meantime, a mighty angel stood in heaven,
And cried aloud, "Associate now yourselves,
Ye princes, potentates, and men of war,
And mitred heads, associate now yourselves,
And be dispersed : embattle, and be broken.
Gird on your armour, and be dashed to dust.
Gird on your armour, and be dashed to dust.
Take counsel, and it shall be brought to nought.
Speak, and it shall not stand." And suddenly
The armies of the saints, embannered, stood
On Zion hill : and with them angels stood
In squadron bright, and chariots of fire ;
And with them stood the Lord, clad like a man
Of war, and, to the sound of thunder, led
The battle on. Earth shook, the kingdoms shook,
The Beast, the lying Seer, dominions, fell ;
Thrones, tyrants, fell, confounded in the dust,
Scattered and driven before the breath of God,
As chaff of summer thrashing-floor before
The wind. Three days the battle wasting slew.
The sword was full, the arrow drunk with blood ;
And to the supper of Almighty God,
Spread in Hamonah's vale, the fowls of heaven,
And every beast, invited, came ; and fed
On captains' flesh, and drank the blood of kings.

*

And lo ! another angel stood in heaven,
Crying aloud with mighty voice, " Fallen, fallen,
Is Babylon the Great, to rise no more.
Rejoice, ye prophets ! over her rejoice,
Apostles ! holy men, all saints, rejoice !

And glory give to God and to the Lamb!"
And all the armies of disburdened earth,
As voice of many waters, and as voice
Of thunderings, and voice of multitudes,
Answered, Amen. And every hill, and rock,
And sea, and every beast, answered, Amen.
Europa answered, and the farthest bounds
Of woody Chili, Asia's fertile coasts,
And Afric's burning wastes, answered, Amen;
And Heaven, rejoicing, answered back, Amen.
Not so the wicked. They afar were heard
Lamenting. Kings who drank her cup of whoredoms,
Captains, and admirals, and mighty men,
Who lived deliciously; and merchants, rich
With merchandise of gold, and wine, and oil;
And those who traded in the souls of men,
Known by their gaudy robes of priestly pomp;—
All these afar off stood, crying, Alas!
Alas! and wept, and gnashed their teeth, and groaned;
And with the owl that on her ruins sat,
Made dolorous concert in the ear of Night.
And over her again the Heavens rejoiced,
And Earth returned again the loud response.

Thrice happy days! thrice blest the man who saw
Their dawn! The Church and State, that long had held
Unholy intercourse, were now divorced;
Princes were righteous men, judges upright;
And first, in general, now—for in the worst
Of times there were some honest seers—the priest
Sought other than the fleece among his flock,
Best paid when God was honoured most; and like
A cedar, nourished well, Jerusalem grew,
And towered on high, and spread, and flourished fair;

And underneath her boughs the nations lodged ;
All nations lodged, and sang the song of peace.
From the four winds, the Jews, eased of the curse,
Returned, and dwelt with God in Jacob's land,
And drank of Sharon and of Carmel's vine.
Satan was bound ; though bound, not banished quite,
But lurked about the timorous skirts of things,
Ill lodged, and thinking whiles to leave the earth ;
And with the wicked, for some wicked were,
Held midnight meetings, as the saints were wont,
Fearful of day, who once was as the sun,
And worshipped more. The bad, but few, became
A taunt and hissing now, as heretofore
The good ; and, blushing, hasted out of sight.
Disease was none ; the voice of war forgot ;
The sword, a share ; a pruning-hook, the spear.
Men grew and multiplied upon the earth,
And filled the city and the waste ; and Death
Stood waiting for the lapse of tardy Age,
That mocked him long. Men grew and multiplied,
But lacked not bread ; for God His promise brought
To mind, and blessed the land with plenteous rain,
And made it blest for dews, and precious things
Of heaven, and blessings of the deep beneath,
And blessings of the sun and moon, and fruits
Of day and night, and blessings of the vale,
And precious things of the eternal hills,
And all the fulness of perpetual spring.

The prison-house, where chainèd felons pined,
Threw open his ponderous doors, let in the light
Of heaven, and grew into a church where God
Was worshipped. None were ignorant, selfish none.
Love took the place of law ; where'er you met

A man, you met a friend, sincere and true.
Kind looks foretold as kind a heart within ;
Words as they sounded, meant ; and promises
Were made to be performed. Thrice happy days !
Philosophy was sanctified, and saw
Perfection, which she thought a fable long.
Revenge his dagger dropped, and kissed the hand
Of Mercy ; Anger cleared his cloudy brow,
And sat with Peace ; Envy grew red, and smiled
On Worth ; Pride stooped, and kissed Humility ;
Lust washed his miry hands, and, wedded, leaned
On chaste Desire ; and Falsehood laid aside
His many-folded cloak, and bowed to Truth ;
And Treachery up from his mining came,
And walked above the ground with righteous Faith ;
And Covetousness unclenched his sinewy hand,
And oped his door to Charity, the fair :
Hatred was lost in Love ; and Vanity,
With a good conscience pleased, her feathers cropped ;
Sloth in the morning rose with Industry ;
To Wisdom, Folly turned ; and Fashion turned
Deception off, in act as good as word.
The hand that held a whip was lifted up
To bless ; Slave was a word in ancient books
Met only ; every man was free ; and all
Feared God, and served Him day and night in love.

How fair the daughter of Jerusalem then !
How gloriously from Zion hill she looked !
Clothed with the sun, and in her train the moon,
And on her head a coronet of stars ;
And girdling round her waist, with heavenly grace,
The bow of Mercy bright ; and in her hand
Immanuel's cross, her sceptre and her hope.

Desire of every land ! the nations came,
And worshipped at her feet ; all nations came.
Flocking like doves : Columbia's painted tribes,
That from Magellan to the Frozen Bay,
Beneath the Arctic, dwelt, and drank the tides
Of Amazona, prince of earthly streams ;
Or slept at noon beneath the giant shade
Of Andes' mount : or, roving northward, heard
Niagara sing, from Erie's billow down
To Frontenac, and hunted thence the fur
To Labrador. And Afric's dusky swarms,
That from Morocco to Angola dwelt,
And drank the Niger from his native wells,
Or roused the lion in Numidia's groves ;
The tribes that sat among the fabled cliffs
Of Atlas, looking to Atlanta's wave,—
With joy and melody arose and came.
Zara awoke and came ; and Egypt came,
Casting her idol gods into the Nile.
Black Ethiopia, that, shadowless,
Beneath the Torrid burned, arose and came.
Dauma, and Medra, and the pirate tribes
Of Algeri, with incense came, and pure
Offerings, annoying now the seas no more.
The silken tribes of Asia, flocking, came
Innumerable : Ismael's wandering race, that rode
On camels o'er the spicy tract that lay
From Persia to the Red Sea coast ; the king
Of broad Cathay, with numbers infinite
Of many lettered castes ; and all the tribes
That dwelt from Tigris to the Ganges' wave,
And worshipped fire, or Brahma, fabled god ;
Cashmeres, Circassians, Banyans, tender race,
That swept the insect from their path, and lived

On herbs and fruits ; and those who peaceful dwelt
Along the shady avenue that stretched
From Agra to Lahore ; and all the hosts
That owned the Crescent late, deluded long ;
The Tartar hordes, that roamed from Obi's bank,
Ungoverned, southward to the wondrous Wall.
The tribes of Europe came : the Greek, redeemed
From Turkish thrall, the Spaniard came, and Gaul,
And Britain with her ships, and on his sledge
The Laplander, that nightly watched the Bear
Circling the Pole ; and those who saw the flames
Of Hecla burn the drifted snow ; the Russ,
Long-whiskered, and equestrian Pole ; and those
Who drank the Rhine, or lost the evening sun
Behind the Alpine towers ; and she that sat
By Arno, classic stream ; Venice, and Rome,
Headquarters long of sin ! first guileless now,
And meaning as she seemed, stretched forth her hands.
And all the isles of ocean rose and came,
Whether they heard the roll of banished tides,
Antipodes to Albion's wave, or watched
The Moon ascending chalky Teneriffe,
And with Atlanta holding nightly love.
The Sun, the Moon, the Constellations, came ;
Thrice twelve and ten that watched the Antarctic sleep,
Twice six that near the ecliptic dwelt, thrice twelve
And one, that with the streamers danced, and saw
The hyperborean ice guarding the Pole.
The East, the West, the South, and snowy North,
Rejoicing met, and worshipped reverently
Before the Lord, in Zion's holy hill ;
And all the places round about were blest.

The animals, as once in Eden, lived

In peace. The wolf dwelt with the lamb, the bear
And leopard with the ox. With looks of love,
The tiger and the scaly crocodile
Together met, at Gambia's palmy wave.
Perched on the eagle's wing, the bird of song,
Singing, arose, and visited the sun ;
And with the falcon sat the gentle lark.
The little child leaped from his mother's arms,
And stroked the crested snake, and rolled unhurt
Among his speckled waves, and wished him home ;
And sauntering schoolboys, slow returning, played
At eve about the lion's den, and wove
Into his shaggy mane fantastic flowers.
To meet the husbandman, early abroad,
Hasted the deer, and waved its woody head ;
And round his dewy steps the hare, unscared,
Sported and toyed familiar with his dog.
The flocks and herds, o'er hill and valley spread,
Exulting, cropped the ever-budding herb.
The desert blossomed, and the barren sang.
Justice and Mercy, Holiness and Love,
Among the people walked ; Messiah reigned ;
And Earth kept jubilee a thousand years.



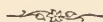
THE COURSE OF TIME

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT.

The Millennium ended.—Satan unbound.—Violence and crime prevail over all the earth, now ripe for final doom.—The Bard foretells the descent of the Almighty, and the dissolution of Nature and the elements.—Apostrophe to holy bards of the latter time.—Wretchedness and terrors of the wicked.—The daughters of men and all Nature called to lament.—The Bard again reverts to the sinful state of the world after the Millennial rest.—The ambition of priests.—The corrupt union of Church and State.—Profanation of the Sabbath.—The frothy orator admired above the faithful preacher.—The workings of the opposing principles of sloth and the love of approbation in the human heart:—Both principles alike dangerous.—The love of praise exemplified in a variety of characters.—Pernicious effects of sloth in the literary man.—Maturity of every species of crime in the latter days.—The Theatre.—Excess of ceremonial and treacherous politeness.—Symptoms of the approaching catastrophe:—The sun reeling in the heavens:—Unearthly portents.—Men alarmed but not reformed:—Their false notions and explanations of the warning prodigies.—Deceitful calm succeeds.—Men return to their former courses.—In heaven the elders round the Throne gaze on the Dial by which Time is measured.—Mercy pleads that Vengeance may be stayed; gleams of love still mingle with the terrors of Omnipotence.—The Earth increasing in wickedness, Satan, Death, and Sin, have full sway:—Every species of crime abounds.—The last hour come.—The number of the elect complete.—Mercy withdraws, and Justice bares his sword.—The trumpet of heaven summoning to evening worship, the Bard suspends his narrative.—The heavenly worshippers.—The various employments of the inhabitants of heaven.—God and the Lamb the centre and object of all the blessed spirits.—None unemployed in heaven.—The songs of heaven ever new.—Anthem sung before the Throne.—The Bard of Judah leads the strain, which redeemed and angel harps repeat.—The Amen repeated by all the hosts of heaven—echoed through Eternity.—The New-arrived accepted and welcomed.—Evening landscape of Paradise.

THE COURSE OF TIME.



BOOK VI.

RESUME thy tone of woe, immortal harp !
The song of mirth is past, the jubilee
Is ended, and the sun begins to fade !
Soon past, for Happiness counts not the hours :
To her a thousand years seem as a day ;
A day, a thousand years to misery.
Satan is loose, and Violence is heard,
And Riot in the street, and Revelry
Intoxicate, and Murder, and Revenge.
Put on your armour now, ye righteous ! put
The helmet of salvation on, and gird
Your loins about with truth ; add righteousness,
And add the shield of faith, and take the sword
Of God—awake and watch !—The day is near,
Great day of God Almighty and the Lamb !
The harvest of the earth is fully ripe ;
Vengeance begins to tread the great wine-press
Of fierceness and of wrath ; and Mercy pleads—
Mercy that pleaded long, she pleads—no more !

Whence comes that darkness? whence those yells of
woe?

What thunderings are these that shake the world?
Why fall the lamps from heaven as blasted figs?
Why tremble righteous men? why angels pale?
Why is all fear? what has become of hope?
God comes! God in his car of vengeance comes!
Hark! louder on the blast come hollow shrieks
Of dissolution; in the fitful scowl
Of night, near and more near, angels of death
Incessant flap their deadly wings, and roar
Through all the fevered air; the mountains rock;
The moon is sick, and all the stars of heaven
Burn feebly: oft and sudden gleams the fire,
Revealing awfully the brow of Wrath.
The thunder, long and loud, utters his voice,
Responsive to the ocean's troubled growl.
Night comes, last night—the long, dark, dark, dark
night,

That has no morn beyond it, and no star.
No eye of man hath seen a night like this.
Heaven's trampled justice girds itself for fight;
Earth, to thy knees, and cry for mercy! Cry
With earnest heart; for thou art growing old
And hoary, unrepented, unforgiven.
And all thy glory mourns. The vintage mourns;
Bashan and Carmel, mourn and weep! and mourn,
Thou Lebanon, with all thy cedars, mourn!
Sun! glorying in thy strength from age to age,
So long observant of thy hour, put on
Thy weeds of woe, and tell the moon to weep;
Utter thy grief at mid-day, morn, and even;
Tell all the nations, tell the clouds that sit
About the portals of the east and west,

And wanton with thy golden locks, to wait
Thee not to-morrow—for no morrow comes.
Tell men and women, tell the new-born child,
And every eye that sees, to come, and see
Thee set behind Eternity—for thou
Shalt go to bed to-night, and ne'er awake.
Stars! walking on the pavement of the sky,
Out-sentinels of heaven, watching the earth,
Cease dancing now; your lamps are growing dim,
Your graves are dug among the dismal clouds,
And angels are assembled round your bier.
Orion, mourn! and Mazzaroth, and thou,
Arcturus, mourn, with all thy northern sons.
Daughters of Pleiades, that nightly shed
Sweet influence; and thou, fairest of stars!
Eye of the morning, weep, and weep at eve:
Weep setting, now to rise no more, “and flame
On forehead of the dawn”—as sang the bard,
Great bard! who used on earth a seraph's lyre,
Whose numbers wandered through Eternity,
And gave sweet foretaste of the heavenly harps.
Minstrel of sorrow! native of the dark!
Shrub-loving Philomel, that wooed the dews
At midnight from their starry beds, and, charmed,
Held them around thy song till dawn awoke—
Sad bird! pour through the gloom thy weeping song,
Pour all thy dying melody of grief,
And with the turtle spread the wave of woe:
Spare not thy reed, for thou shalt sing no more!

Ye holy bards! if yet a holy bard
Remain, what chord shall serve ye now? what harp?
What harp shall sing the dying sun asleep,
And mourn behind the funeral of the moon?

What harp of boundless, deep, exhaustless woe,
Shall utter forth the groanings of the damned,
And sing the obsequies of wicked souls,
And wail their plunge in the eternal fire?—
Hold, hold your hands! hold, angels!—God laments,
And draws a cloud of mourning round His throne:
The organ of Eternity is mute,
And there is silence in the heaven of heavens.

Daughters of beauty! choice of beings made;
Much praised, much blamed, much loved; but fairer far
Than aught beheld, than aught imagined else
Fairest, and dearer than all else most dear;
Light of the darksome wilderness; to Time
As stars to night, whose eyes were spells that held
The passenger forgetful of his way;
Whose steps were majesty, whose words were song,
Whose smiles were hope, whose actions perfect grace;
Whose love, the solace, glory, and delight
Of man, his boast, his riches, his renown:
When found, sufficient bliss; when lost, despair:
Stars of creation! images of love!
Break up the fountains of your tears—your tears,
More eloquent than learned tongue, or lyre .
Of purest note—your sunny raiment stain,
Put dust upon your heads, lament and weep,
And utter all your minstrelsy of woe.

Go to, ye wicked! weep and howl; for all
That God hath written against you is at hand.
The cry of violence hath reached His ear:
Hell is prepared, and Justice whets his sword.
Weep all of every name! Begin the woe,
Ye woods, and tell it to the doleful winds;

And, doleful winds, wail to the howling hills;
And, howling hills, mourn to the dismal vales;
And, dismal vales, sigh to the sorrowing brooks;
And, sorrowing brooks, weep to the weeping stream;
And, weeping stream, awake the groaning deep;
And let the instrument take up the song,
Responsive to the voice—harmonious woe.
Ye Heavens, great archway of the universe,
Put sackcloth on; and, Ocean, clothe thyself
In garb of widowhood, and gather all
Thy waves into a groan, and utter it,
Long, loud, deep, piercing, dolorous, immense!
The occasion asks it: Nature dies, and God
And angels come to lay her in the grave.

But we have overleaped our theme: behind,
A little season waits a verse or two—
The years that followed the Millennial rest.
Bad years they were: and first, as signal sure
That at the core religion was diseased,
The sons of Levi strove again for place,
And eminence, and names of swelling pomp,
Setting their feet upon the people's neck,
And slumbering in the lap of civil power;
Of civil power again tyrannical.
And, second sign, sure sign, whenever seen,
That holiness was dying in a land,
The Sabbath was profaned and set at nought:
The honest seer, who spoke the truth of God
Plainly, was left with empty walls; and round
The frothy orator, who busked his tales
In quackish pomp of noisy words, the ear
Tickling, but leaving still the heart unprobed,
The judgment uninformed—numbers immense

Flocked, gaping wide, with passions high inflamed ;
And on the way returning, heated, home,
Of eloquence, and not of truth, conversed—
Mean eloquence that wanted sacred truth.

Two principles from the beginning strove
In human nature, still dividing man—
Sloth and activity ; the lust of praise,
And indolence that rather wished to sleep.
And not unfrequently in the same mind
They dubious contest held ; one gaining now,
And now the other crowned, and both again
Keeping the field, with equal combat fought.
Much different was their voice. Ambition called
To action, sloth invited to repose.
Ambition early rose, and, being up,
Toiled ardently, and late retired to rest ;
Sloth lay till mid-day, turning on his couch,
Like ponderous door upon its weary hinge ;
And having rolled him out, with much ado,
And many a dismal sigh, and vain attempt,
He sauntered out, accoutred carelessly—
With half-oped, misty, unobservant eye,
Somniferous, that weighed the object down
On which its burden fell—an hour or two ;
Then with a groan retired to rest again.
The one, whatever deed had been achieved,
Thought it too little, and too small the praise ;
The other tried to think—for thinking so
Answered his purpose best—that what of great
Mankind could do had been already done ;
And therefore laid him calmly down to sleep.

Different in mode, destructive both alike.

Destructive always indolence ; and love
Of fame destructive always too, if less
Than praise of God it sought, content with less ;
Even then not current, if it sought His praise
From other motive than resistless love :
Though base, mainspring of action in the world ;
And, under name of vanity and pride,
Was greatly practised on by cunning men.
It oped the niggard's purse, clothed nakedness,
Gave beggars food, and threw the Pharisee
Upon his knees, and kept him long in act
Of prayer ; it spread the lace upon the fop,
His language trimmed, and planned his curious gait ;
It stuck the feather on the gay coquette,
And on her finger laid the heavy load
Of jewellery. It did—what did it not ?—
The gospel preached, the gospel paid, and sent
The gospel ; conquered nations ; cities built ;
Measured the furrow of the field with nice
Directed share ; shaped bulls, and cows, and rams ;
And threw the ponderous stone ; and, pitiful
Indeed, and much against the grain, it dragged
The stagnant, dull, predestinated fool
Through learning's halls, and made him labour much
Abortively, though sometimes not unpraised.
He left the sage's chair, and home returned,
Making his simple mother think that she
Had born a man. In schools, designed to root
Sin up, and plant the seeds of holiness
In youthful minds, it held a signal place.
The little infant man, by nature proud,
Was taught the Scriptures by the love of praise,
And grew religious as he grew in fame.
And thus the principle, which out of heaven

The devil threw, and threw him down to hell,
And keeps him there, was made an instrument
To moralise and sanctify mankind,
And in their hearts beget humility;
With what success it needs not now to say.

Destructive both, we said, activity
And sloth: behold the last exemplified
In literary man. Not all at once
He yielded to the soothing voice of sleep;
But having seen a bough of laurel wave,
He effort made to climb; and friends, and even
Himself, talked of his greatness as at hand,
And, prophesying, drew his future life.
Vain prophecy! His fancy, taught by sloth,
Saw in the very threshold of pursuit
A thousand obstacles; he halted first,
And while he halted, saw his burning hopes
Grow dim and dimmer still; ambition's self,
The advocate of loudest tongue, decayed;
His purposes, made daily, daily broken,
Like plant uprooted oft and set again,
More sickly grew, and daily wavered more;
Till at the last, decision, quite worn out—
Decision, fulcrum of the mental powers,
Resigned the blasted soul to staggering chance:
Sleep gathered fast, and weighed him downward still;
His eye fell heavy from the mount of fame;
His young resolves to benefit the world
Perished, and were forgotten; he shut his ear
Against the painful news of rising worth,
And drank with desperate thirst the poppy's juice;
A deep and mortal slumber settled down
Upon his weary faculties oppressed;

He rolled from side to side, and rolled again ;
And snored, and groaned, and withered, and expired,
And rotted on the spot, leaving no name.

The hero best example gives of toil
Unsanctified ; one word his history writes :
He was a murderer above the laws,
And greatly praised for doing murderous deeds.
And now he grew, and reached his perfect growth ;
And also now the sluggard soundest slept,
And by him lay the uninterrèd corpse.

Of every order, sin and wickedness,
Deliberate, cool, malicious villany,
This age attained maturity, unknown
Before ; and seemed in travail to bring forth
Some last, enormous, monstrous deed of guilt,
Original, unprecedented guilt,
That might obliterate the memory
Of what had hitherto been done most vile.
Inventive men were paid at public cost,
To plan new modes of sin ; the holy word
Of God was burned, with acclamations loud ;
New tortures were invented for the good—
For still some good remained, as whiles through sky
Of thickest clouds a wandering star appeared—
New oaths of blasphemy were framed and sworn ;
And men in reputation grew, as grew
The stature of their crimes. Faith was not found ;
Truth was not found : truth always scarce, so scarce
That half the misery which groaned on earth
In ordinary times, was progeny
Of disappointment, daily coming forth
From broken promises, that might have ne'er

Been made, or, being made, might have been kept.
Justice and mercy too were rare, obscured
In cottage garb ; before the palace door
The beggar rotted, starving in his rags ;
And on the threshold of luxurious domes
The orphan child laid down his head, and died ;
Nor unamusing was his piteous cry
To women, who had now laid tenderness
Aside, best pleased with sights of cruelty ;
Flocking, when fouler lusts would give them time,
To horrid spectacles of blood, where men,
Or guiltless beasts, that seemed to look to heaven
With eye imploring vengeance on the earth,
Were tortured for the merriment of kings.
The advocate, for him who offered most,
Pleaded ; the scribe, according to the hire,
Worded the lie, adding, for every piece,
An oath of confirmation ; judges raised
One hand to intimate the sentence—death,
Imprisonment, or fine, or loss of goods—
And in the other held a lusty bribe,
Which they had taken to give the sentence wrong ;
So managing the scale of justice still,
That he was wanting found who poorest seemed.

But laymen, most renowned for devilish deeds,
Laboured at distance still behind the priest :
He shorn his sheep, and having packed the wool,
Sent them unguarded to the hill of wolves ;
And to the bowl deliberately sat down,
And with his mistress mocked at sacred things.

The Theatre was, from the very first,
The favourite haunt of sin, though honest men—

Some very honest, wise, and worthy men—
Maintained it might be turned to good account ;
And so perhaps it might, but never was.
From first to last it was an evil place :
And now such things were acted there as made
The devils blush ; and from the neighbourhood
Angels and holy men, trembling, retired.
And what with dreadful aggravation crowned
This dreary time, was sin against the light.
All men knew God, and, knowing, disobeyed,
And gloried to insult Him to His face.

Another feature only we shall mark.
It was withal a highly polished age,
And scrupulous in ceremonious rite.
When stranger stranger met upon the way,
First, each to each bowed most respectfully,
And large profession made of humble service,
And then the stronger took the other's purse ;
And he that stabbed his neighbour to the heart,
Stabbed him politely, and returned the blade
Reeking into its sheath, with graceful air.

Meantime the Earth gave symptoms of her end ;
And all the scenery above proclaimed
That the great last catastrophe was near.
The sun at rising staggered, and fell back,
As one too early up, after a night
Of late debauch ; then rose, and shone again,
Brighter than wont ; and sickened again, and paused
In zenith altitude, as one fatigued ;
And shed a feeble twilight ray at noon,
Rousing the wolf before his time to chase
The shepherd and his sheep, that sought for light,

And darkness found, astonished, terrified ;
Then out of course rolled furious down the west,
As chariot reined by awkward charioteer ;
And, waiting at the gate, he on the earth
Gazed, as he thought he ne'er might see't again.
The bow of mercy, heretofore so fair,
Ribbed with the native hues of heavenly love,
Disastrous colours showed, unseen till now ;
Changing upon the watery gulf from pale
To fiery red, and back again to pale ;
And o'er it hovered wings of wrath. The moon
Staggered in midst of heaven, grew black and dark,
Unclouded, uneclipsed. The stars fell down,
Tumbling from off their towers like drunken men,
Or seemed to fall ; and glimmered now, and now
Sprang out in sudden blaze, and dimmed again,
As lamp of foolish virgin lacking oil.
The heavens, this moment, looked serene ; the next,
Glowed like an oven, with God's displeasure hot.

Nor less, below, was intimation given
Of some disaster great and ultimate.
The tree that bloomed, or hung with clustering fruit,
Untouched by visible calamity
Of frost or tempest, died, and came again.
The flower and herb fell down as sick ; then rose,
And fell again. The fowls of every hue,
Crowding together, sailed on weary wing ;
And, hovering, oft they seemed about to light ;
Then soared, as if they thought the earth unsafe.
The cattle looked with meaning face on man.
Dogs howled, and seemed to see more than their
masters.
And there were sights that none had seen before ;

And hollow, strange, unprecedented sounds,
And earnest whisperings, ran along the hills,
At dead of night ; and long, deep, endless sighs
Came from the dreary vale ; and from the waste
Came horrid shrieks, and fierce, unearthly groans,
The wail of evil spirits, that now felt
The hour of utter vengeance near at hand.
The winds from every quarter blew at once
With desperate violence, and, whirling, took
The traveller up, and threw him down again,
At distance from his path, confounded, pale.
And shapes, strange shapes, in winding-sheets were
seen,
Gliding through night, and singing funeral songs,
And imitating sad sepulchral rites ;
And voices talked among the clouds, and still
The words that men could catch were spoken of them,
And seemed to be the words of wonder great,
And expectation of some vast event.
Earth shook, and swam, and reeled, and opened her
jaws,
By earthquake tossed, and tumbled to and fro ;
And louder than the ear of man had heard,
The thunder bellowed, and the ocean groaned.

The race of men, perplexed, but not reformed,
Flocking together, stood in earnest crowds,
Conversing of the awful state of things.
Some curious explanations gave, unlearned ;
Some tried affectedly to laugh, and some
Gazed stupidly ; but all were sad and pale,
And wished the comment of the wise. Nor less,
These prodigies, occurring night and day,
Perplexed philosophy. The Magi tried—

Magi, a name not seldom given to fools
In the vocabulary of earthly speech—
They tried to trace them still to second cause ;
But scarcely satisfied themselves ; though round
Their deep deliberations crowding came,
And, wondering at their wisdom, went away,
Much quieted, and very much deceived,
The people, always glad to be deceived.

These warnings passed—they unregarded passed ;
And all in wonted order calmly moved.
The pulse of Nature regularly beat,
And on her cheek the bloom of perfect health
Again appeared. Deceitful pulse ! and bloom
Deceitful ! and deceitful calm ! The earth
Was old, and worn within ; but—like the man,
Who noticed not his mid-day strength decline,
Sliding so gently round the curvature
Of life, from youth to age,—she knew it not.
The calm was like the calm which oft the man,
Dying, experienced before his death ;
The bloom was but a hectic flush, before
The eternal paleness. But all these were taken,
By this last race of men, for tokens of good ;
And blustering public News aloud proclaimed—
News always gabbling, ere they well had thought—
Prosperity, and joy, and peace ; and mocked
The man who, kneeling, prayed, and trembled still ;
And all in earnest to their sins returned.

It was not so in heaven. The elders round
The Throne conversed about the state of man ;
Conjecturing, for none of certain knew,
That Time was at an end. They gazed intense

Upon the Dial's face, which yonder stands
In gold before the Sun of Righteousness,
Jehovah, and computes times, seasons, years,
And destinies, and slowly numbers o'er
The mighty cycles of eternity;
By God alone completely understood,
But read by all, revealing much to all.
And now, to saints of eldest skill, the ray
Which on the gnomon fell of Time, seemed sent
From level west, and hasting quickly down.
The holy Virtues watching, saw, besides,
Great preparation going on in heaven,
Betokening great event, greater than aught
That first-created seraphim had seen.
The faithful messengers, who have for wing
The lightning, waiting day and night on God,
Before His face, beyond their usual speed,
On pinion of celestial light were seen,
Coming and going, and their road was still
From heaven to earth, and back again to heaven.
The angel of Mercy, bent before the Throne,
By earnest pleading, seemed to hold the hand
Of Vengeance back, and win a moment more
Of late repentance for some sinful world
In jeopardy: and now the hill of God,
The mountain of His majesty, rolled flames
Of fire, now smiled with momentary love,
And now again with fiery fierceness burned;
And from behind the darkness of His throne,
Through which created vision never saw,
The living thunders in their native caves
Muttered the terrors of Omnipotence,
And ready seemed, impatient to fulfil
Some errand of exterminating wrath.

Meanwhile the Earth increased in wickedness,
And hasted daily to fill up her cup.
Satan raged loose, Sin had her will, and Death
Enough. Blood trod upon the heels of blood;
Revenge, in desperate mood, at midnight met
Revenge; war brayed to war; deceit deceived
Deceit; lie cheated lie; and treachery
Mined under treachery; and perjury
Swore back on perjury; and blasphemy
Arose with hideous blasphemy; and curse
Loud answered curse; and drunkard, stumbling, fell
O'er drunkard fallen; and husband husband met,
Returning each from other's bed defiled;
Thief stole from thief; and robber on the way
Knocked robber down; and lewdness, violence,
And hate, met lewdness, violence, and hate.
Oh Earth! thy hour was come: the last elect
Was born, complete the number of the good,
And the last sand fell from the glass of Time.
The cup of guilt was full up to the brim;
And Mercy, weary with beseeching, had
Retired behind the sword of Justice, red
With ultimate and unrepenting wrath.
But man knew not; he o'er his bowl laughed loud,
And, prophesying, said, "To-morrow shall
As this day be, and more abundant still!"
As thou shalt hear—But, hark! the trumpet sounds,
And calls to evening song; for, though with hymn
Eternal, course succeeding course extol
In presence of the incarnate, holy God,
And celebrate His never-ending praise—
Duly at morn and night, the multitudes
Of men redeemed, and angels, all the hosts
Of glory, join in universal song,

And pour celestial harmony from harps
Above all number, eloquent and sweet,
Above all thought of melody conceived.
And now behold the fair inhabitants,
Delightful sight! from numerous business turn,
And round and round through all the extent of
bliss

Towards the temple of Jehovah bow,
And worship reverently before His face!

Pursuits are various here, suiting all tastes,
Though holy all, and glorifying God.
Observe yon band pursue the sylvan stream :
Mounting among the cliffs, they pull the flower,
Springing as soon as pulled, and, marvelling, pry
Into its veins, and circulating blood,
And wondrous mimicry of higher life ;
Admire its colours, fragrance, gentle shape ;
And thence admire the God who made it so—
So simple, complex, and so beautiful.

Behold yon other band, in airy robes
Of bliss. They weave the sacred bower of rose
And myrtle shade, and shadowy verdant bay,
And laurel, towering high ; and round their song
The pink and lily bring, and amaranth,
Narcissus sweet, and jessamine ; and bring
The clustering vine, stooping with flower and fruit,
The peach and orange, and the sparkling stream,
Warbling with nectar to their lips unasked ;
And talk the while of everlasting love.

On yonder hill, behold another band,
Of piercing, steady, intellectual eye.

And spacious forehead of sublimest thought.
They reason deep of present, future, past ;
And trace effect to cause ; and meditate
On the eternal laws of God, which bind
Circumference to centre ; and survey
With optic tubes, that fetch remotest stars
Near them, the systems circling round, immense,
Innumerable. See how—as he, the sage,
Among the most renowned in days of Time,
Renowned for large, capacious, holy soul,
Demonstrates clearly motion, gravity,
Attraction, and repulsion, still opposed ;
And dips into the deep, original,
Unknown, mysterious, elements of things—
See how the face of every auditor
Expands with admiration of the skill,
Omnipotence, and boundless love of God !

These other, sitting near the tree of life,
In robes of linen, flowing white and clean,
Of holiest aspect, of divinest soul,
Angels and men—into the glory look
Of the redeeming love, and turn the leaves
Of man's redemption o'er—the secret leaves
Which none on earth were found worthy to open ;
And as they read the mysteries divine,
The endless mysteries of salvation, wrought
By God's Incarnate Son, they humbler bow
Before the Lamb, and glow with warmer love.

These other, there relaxed beneath the shade
Of yon embowering palms, with friendship smile,
And talk of ancient days, and young pursuits,
Of dangers past, of godly triumphs won ;



*“ These other, there relaxed beneath the shade
Of yon embowering palms, with friendship smile.”*

And sing the legends of their native land,
Less pleasing far than this their Father's house.

Behold that other band, half lifted up
Between the hill and dale, reclined beneath
The shadow of impending rocks, 'mong streams,
And thundering waterfalls, and waving boughs ;
That band, of countenance sublime and sweet,
Whose eye, with piercing intellectual ray,
Now beams severe, or now bewildered seems,
Left rolling wild, or fixed in idle gaze,
While Fancy and the soul are far from home ;
These hold the pencil, art divine ! and throw
Before the eye remembered scenes of love ;
Each picturing to each the hills and skies,
And treasured stories of the world he left ;
Or, gazing on the scenery of heaven,
They dip their hand in colour's native well,
And, on the everlasting canvass, dash
Figures of glory, imagery divine,
With grace and grandeur in perfection knit.

But whatsoe'er these spirits blest pursue,
Where'er they go, whatever sights they see
Of glory and bliss through all the tracts of heaven ;
The centre, still, the figure eminent,
Whither they ever turn, on whom all eyes
Repose with infinite delight, is God,
And His incarnate Son, the Lamb once slain
On Calvary, to ransom ruined men.

None idle here : Look where thou wilt, they all
Are active, all engaged in meet pursuit ;
Not happy else. Hence is it that the song

Of heaven is ever new ; for daily thus,
And nightly, new discoveries are made
Of God's unbounded wisdom, power, and love,
Which give the understanding larger room,
And swell the hymn with ever-growing praise.

Behold they cease ! and every face to God
Turns : and we pause from high poetic theme,
Not worthy least of being sung in heaven ;
And on unveiled Godhead look from this,
Our oft-frequented hill. He takes the harp,
Nor needs to seek befitting phrase ; unsought,
Numbers harmonious roll along the lyre :
As river in its native bed, they flow
Spontaneous, flowing with the tide of thought.
He takes the harp—a bard of Judah leads,
This night, the boundless song ; the bard that once,
When Israel's king was sad and sick to death,
A message brought of fifteen added years.
Before the Throne he stands sublime, in robes
Of glory ; and now his fingers wake the chords
To praise, which we and all in heaven repeat.

Harp of Eternity ! begin the song ;
Redeemed and angel harps ! begin to God,
Begin the anthem ever sweet and new,
While I extol Him, holy, just, and good.
Life, beauty, light, intelligence, and love !
Eternal, uncreated, infinite !
Unsearchable Jehovah ! God of truth !
Maker, Upholder, Governor of all !
Thyself unmade, ungoverned, unupheld !
Omnipotent, unchangeable, great God !
Exhaustless fulness ! giving unimpaired !

Bounding immensity, unspread, unbound !
Highest and best ! beginning, middle, end !
All-seeing Eye ! all-seeing, and unseen !
Hearing, unheard ! all-knowing, and unknown !
Above all praise ! above all height of thought !
Proprietor of immortality !
Glory ineffable ! Bliss underived !
Of old Thou built'st Thy throne on righteousness,
Before the morning stars their song began,
Or silence heard the voice of praise. Thou laid'st
Eternity's foundation-stone, and saw'st
Life and existence out of Thee begin.
Mysterious more, the more displayed, where still
Upon Thy glorious throne Thou sitt'st alone,
Hast sat alone, and shalt for ever sit
Alone, invisible, immortal One !
Behind essential brightness unbeheld.
Incomprehensible ! what weight shall weigh,
What measure measure Thee ! What know we more
Of Thee, what need to know, than Thou hast taught,
And bid'st us still repeat, at morn and even ?—
God ! everlasting Father ! holy One !
Our God, our Father, our eternal All !
Source whence we came, and whither we return ;
Who made our spirits, who our bodies made ;
Who made the heaven, who made the flowery land ;
Who made all made, who orders, governs all.
Who walks upon the wind, who holds the wave
In hollow of Thy hand, whom thunders wait,
Whom tempests serve, whom flaming fires obey,
Who guides the circuit of the endless years,
And sits on high, and makes creation's top
Thy footstool, and beholds, below Thee, all—
All nought, all less than nought, and vanity.

Like transient dust, that hovers on the scale,
Ten thousand worlds are scattered in Thy breath.
Thou sitt'st on high, and measurest destinies,
And days, and months, and wide revolving years;
And dost according to Thy holy will;
And none can stay Thy hand, and none withhold
Thy glory; for in judgment, Thou, as well
As mercy, art exalted, day and night.
Past, present, future, magnify Thy name.
Thy works all praise Thee, all Thy angels praise;
Thy saints adore, and on Thy altars burn
The fragrant incense of perpetual love.
They praise Thee now; their hearts, their voices praise,
And swell the rapture of the glorious song.
Harp, lift thy voice on high! shout, angels, shout!
And loudest, ye redeemed! Glory to God,
And to the Lamb who bought us with his blood
From every kindred, nation, people, tongue;
And washed, and sanctified, and saved our souls;
And gave us robes of linen pure, and crowns
Of life, and made us kings and priests to God.
Shout back to ancient Time! Sing loud, and wave
Your palms of triumph! Sing, Where is thy sting,
O Death! where is thy victory, O Grave!
Thanks be to God, eternal thanks, who gave
Us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Harp, lift thy voice on high! shout, angels, shout!
And loudest, ye redeemed! Glory to God,
And to the Lamb, all glory and all praise,
All glory and all praise, at morn and even,
That come and go eternally, and find
Us happy still, and Thee for ever blest!
Glory to God and to the Lamb! Amen.
For ever and for evermore! Amen.

And those who stood upon the sea of glass,
And those who stood upon the battlements
And lofty towers of New Jerusalem,
And those who circling stood, bowing afar,
Exalted on the everlasting hills,
Thousands of thousands, thousands infinite,
With voice of boundless love, answered, Amen.
And through eternity, near and remote,
The worlds, adoring, echoed back, Amen.
And God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
The One Eternal, smiled superior bliss!
And every eye, and every face in heaven,
Reflecting and reflected, beamed with love.

Nor did he not, the Virtue new arrived,
From Godhead gain an individual smile
Of high acceptance, and of welcome high,
And confirmation evermore in good.
Meantime the landscape glowed with holy joy.
Zephyr, with wing dipped from the Well of Life,
Sporting through Paradise, shed living dews;
The flowers, the spicy shrubs, the lawns, refreshed,
Breathed their selectest balm, breathed odours, such
As angels love; and all the trees of heaven,
The cedar, pine, and everlasting oak,
Rejoicing on the mountains, clapped their hands.

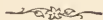
THE COURSE OF TIME

BOOK VII.

ARGUMENT.

The Bard resumes the history of man.—Earth on the morning of the last day.—How men were occupied :—The husbandman—the merchant—the lawyer—the voluptuary—the beauty—the robber—the despot—the statesman—the newsmonger—bishops—heroes—men of science.—No symptom of change :—The sudden darkness :—Consternation of men.—The disregard or dissolution of human ties and affections.—Appearance of the Angel who swears that Time shall be no more.—The universal pause of Nature.—The sound of the trumpet :—Awakening of the dead :—Renewal of the powers of life in the aged, 'sick, and dying :—Restoration of the maniac to reason :—The confined, unburied dead arise :—Battle suspended :—The new-fallen dead rise on the battle-field :—The mangled corpse rises beneath the knife of the dissector.—Effects of the Resurrection on the different orders of men :—Jubilee to the slave.—How the Resurrection surprised the religious student :—How the different classes of men in contrasted situations.—Hallelujahs from heaven of the spirits of the just come to repossess their bodies, and despair of the damned spirits summoned from the place of punishment.—Earth everywhere gives up its dead :—Tombs and burial vaults open.—The Memphian mummy and his purchaser.—The hermit and bard buried in fancied solitude.—The family vault and all its generations.—Resurrection of the benevolent man—of the miser—of the martyr.—Lament over the decay of Nature.—The ancient renowned cities of earth awake.—Resurrection of Jerusalem—of cities overwhelmed by the Flood, and by earthquakes.—Rising of the perished millions of battle-fields—of the legions of Rome—of the host of Sennacherib—of noble bands of patriots—of the caravan buried in the sands of the Desert—of seamen frozen at the Pole.—Resurrection of the First Pair—of Christian missionaries to heathen lands.—The sea gives up its dead.—Ocean apostrophised—Its profound calm on the morning of the Resurrection.—Address to Death—his former power—conquered by the Son of God.—Who are henceforth the inmates of his den.—His occupation through all Eternity.

THE COURSE OF TIME.



BOOK VII.

AS one who meditates at evening tide,
Wandering alone by voiceless solitudes,
And flies, in fancy, far beyond the bounds
Of visible and vulgar things, and things
Discovered hitherto, pursuing tracts
As yet untravelled and unknown, through vast
Of new and sweet imaginings; if chance
Some airy harp, waked by the gentle sprites
Of twilight, or light touch of sylvan maid,
In soft succession fall upon his ear,
And fill the desert with its heavenly tones :
He listens intense, and pleased exceedingly,
And wishes it may never stop ; yet when
It stops, grieves not ; but to his former thoughts
With fondest haste returns : so did the Seer,
So did his audience, after worship past,
And praise in heaven, return to sing, to hear
Of man, not worthy less the sacred lyre,
Or the attentive ear ; and thus the bard,
Not unbesought, again resumed his song.

In custom'd glory bright, that morn, the Sun
Rose, visiting the earth with light, and heat,
And joy ; and seem'd as full of youth, and strong
To mount the steep of heaven, as when the Stars
Of morning sang to his first dawn, and night
Fled from his face. The spacious sky received
Him blushing as a bride, when on her look'd
The bridegroom ; and, spread out beneath his eye,
Earth smiled. Up to his warm embrace, the dews,
That all night long had wept his absence, flew ;
The herbs and flowers their fragrant stores unlocked,
And gave the wanton breeze that, newly woke,
Revelled in sweets, and from its wings shook health,
A thousand grateful smells ; the joyous woods
Dried in his beams their locks, wet with the drops
Of night ; and all the sons of music sang
Their matin song ; from arbour'd bower, the thrush
Concerting with the lark that hymned on high.
On the green hill the flocks, and in the vale
The herds, rejoiced ; and, light of heart, the hind
Eyed amorously the milkmaid as she pass'd,
Not heedless, though she look'd another way.

No sign was there of change. All nature moved
In wonted harmony. Men, as they met,
In morning salutation, praised the day,
And talk'd of common things. The husbandman
Prepared the soil, and silver-tonguèd Hope
Promised another harvest. In the streets,
Each wishing to make profit of his neighbour,
Merchants, assembling, spoke of trying times,
Of bankruptcies, and markets glutted full ;
Or, crowding to the beach, where to their ear
The oath of foreign accent, and the noise

Uncouth of trade's rough sons, made music sweet—
Elate with certain gain, beheld the bark,
Expected long, enriched with other climes,
Into the harbour safely steer; or saw,
Parting with many a weeping farewell sad,
And blessing uttered rude, and sacred pledge,
The rich-laden carack, bound to distant shore,
And hopefully talked of her coming back,
With richer fraught; or, sitting at the desk,
In calculation deep and intricate
Of loss and profit balancing, relieved,
At intervals, the irksome task, with thought
Of future ease, retired in villa snug.

With subtle look, amid his parchments, sat
The lawyer, weaving his sophistries for court
To meet at mid-day. On his weary couch,
Fat Luxury, sick of the night's debauch,
Lay groaning, fretful at the obtrusive beam
That through his lattice peeped derisively.
The restless miser had begun again
To count his heaps. Before her toilet stood
The fair, and, as with guileful skill she decked
Her loveliness, thought of the coming ball,
New lovers, or the sweeter nuptial night.
And evil men of desperate, lawless life,
By oath of deep damnation, leagued to ill
Remorselessly, fled from the face of day,
Against the innocent their counsel held,
Plotting unpardonable deeds of blood,
And villanies of fearful magnitude.
Despots, secured behind a thousand bolts,
The workmanship of fear, forged chains for man.
Senates were meeting, statesmen loudly talked

Of national resources, war and peace,
And sagely balanced empires soon to end ;
And faction's jaded minions, by the page
Paid for abuse and oft-repeated lies,
In daily prints, the thoroughfare of news,
For party schemes made interest, under cloak
Of liberty, and right, and public weal.
In holy conclave bishops spoke of tithes,
And of the awful wickedness of men.
Intoxicate with sceptres, diadems,
And universal rule, and panting hard
For fame, heroes were leading on the brave
To battle. Men in science deeply read,
And academic theory, foretold
Improvements vast ; and learnèd sceptics proved
That earth should with eternity endure—
Concluding madly that there was no God.

No sign of change appeared ; to every man
That day seemed as the past. From noontide path
The sun looked gloriously on earth, and all
Her scenes of giddy folly smiled secure,
When suddenly, alas, fair Earth ! the sun
Was wrapped in darkness, and his beams returned
Up to the throne of God, and over all
The earth came night, moonless and starless night !
Nature stood still. The seas and rivers stood,
And all the winds, and every living thing.
The cataract, that, like a giant wroth,
Rushed down impetuously, as seized, at once,
By sudden frost with all his hoary locks,
Stood still ; and beasts of every kind stood still.
A deep and dreadful silence reigned alone !
Hope died in every breast, and on all men

Came fear and trembling. None to his neighbour
spoke.

Husband thought not of wife, nor of her child
The mother, nor friend of friend, nor foe of foe.
In horrible suspense all mortals stood ;
And, as they stood and listened, chariots were heard
Rolling in heaven. Revealed in flaming fire,
The angel of God appeared in stature vast,
Blazing, and, lifting up his hand on high,
By Him that lives for ever, swore that Time
Should be no more. Throughout, creation heard,
And sighed ; all rivers, lakes, and seas, and woods,
Desponding waste, and cultivated vale,
Wild cave, and ancient hill, and every rock,
Sighed. Earth, arrested in her wonted path,
As ox struck by the lifted axe, when nought
Was feared, in all her entrails deeply groaned.
A universal crash was heard, as if
The ribs of Nature broke, and all her dark
Foundations failed ; and deadly paleness sat
On every face of man, and every heart
Grew chill, and every knee his fellow smote.
None spoke, none stirred, none wept ; for horror held
All motionless, and fettered every tongue.
Again, o'er all the nations silence fell ;
And in the heavens, robed in excessive light
That drove the thick of darkness far aside,
And walked with penetration keen through all
The abodes of men, another angel stood,
And blew the trump of God : Awake, ye dead !
Be changed, ye living, and put on the garb
Of immortality ! Awake ! arise !
The God of Judgment comes !—This said the voice ;
And Silence, from eternity that slept

Beyond the sphere of the creating Word,
And all the noise of Time, awakened, heard:
Heaven heard, and earth, and farthest hell through all
Her regions of despair; the ear of Death,
Heard, and the sleep that for so long a night
Pressed on his leaden eyelids, fled; and all
The dead awoke, and all the living changed.

Old men, that on their staff, bending, had leaned,
Crazy and frail, or sat, benumbed with age,
In weary listlessness, ripe for the grave,
Felt through their sluggish veins and withered limbs
New vigour flow; the wrinkled face grew smooth;
Upon the head that time had razored bare,
Rose bushy locks, and as his son, in prime
Of strength and youth, the aged father stood.
Changing herself, the mother saw her son
Grow up, and suddenly put on the form
Of manhood; and the wretch that begging sat,
Limbless, deformed, at corner of the way,
Unmindful of his crutch, in joint and limb
Arose complete; and he, that on the bed
Of mortal sickness, worn with sore distress,
Lay breathing forth his soul to death, felt now
The tide of life and vigour rushing back;
And, looking up, beheld his weeping wife,
And daughter fond, that o'er him, bending, stooped
To close his eyes. The frantic madman, too,
In whose confusèd brain reason had lost
Her way, long driven at random to and fro,
Grew sober, and his manacles fell off;
The newly-sheeted corpse arose, and stared
On those who dressed it; and the coffined dead,
That men were bearing to the tomb, awoke,



*“ The frantic madman, too,
In whose confusèd brain reason had lost
Her way, long driven at random to and fro,
Grew sober, and his manacles fell off.”*

And mingled with their friends; and armies which
The trump surprised, met in the furious shock
Of battle, saw the bleeding ranks, new fallen,
Rise up at once, and to their ghastly cheeks
Return the stream of life in healthy flow;
And as the anatomist, with all his band
Of rude disciples, o'er the subject hung,
And impolitely hewed his way through bones
And muscles of the sacred human form,
Exposing barbarously to wanton gaze
The mysteries of nature, joint embraced
His kindred joint, the wounded flesh grew up,
And suddenly the injured man awoke
Among their hands, and stood arrayed complete
In immortality—forgiving scarce
The insult offered to his clay in death.

That was the hour, long wished for by the good,
Of universal jubilee to all
The sons of bondage: from the oppressor's hand
The scourge of violence fell; and from his back,
Heal of its stripes, the burden of the slave.

The youth of great religious soul, who sat
Retired in voluntary loneliness,
In reverie extravagant now wrapped,
Or poring now on book of ancient date,
With filial awe, and dipping oft his pen
To write immortal things; to pleasure deaf,
And joys of common men; working his way
With mighty energy, not uninspired,
Through all the mines of thought; reckless of pain.
And weariness, and wasted health; the scoff
Of Pride, or growl of Envy's hellish brood;

While Fancy, voyaged far beyond the bounds
Of years revealed, heard many a future age,
With commendation loud, repeat his name—
False prophetess! the day of change was come—
Behind the shadow of eternity
He saw his visions set of earthly fame,
For ever set; nor sighed, while through his veins,
In lighter current, ran immortal life;
His form renewed to undecaying health;
To undecaying health his soul, erewhile
Not tuned amiss to God's eternal praise.

All men in field and city, by the way,
On land or sea, lolling in gorgeous hall,
Or plying at the oar; crawling in rags
Obscure, or dazzling in embroidered gold;
Alone, in companies, at home, abroad;
In wanton merriment surprised and taken;
Or kneeling reverently in act of prayer;
Or cursing recklessly, or uttering lies,
Or lapping greedily from slander's cup
The blood of reputation; or between
Friendships and brotherhoods devising strife;
Or plotting to defile a neighbour's bed;
In duel met with dagger of revenge;
Or casting on the widow's heritage
The eye of covetousness; or with full hand
On mercy's noiseless errands, unobserved,
Administering, or meditating fraud
And deeds of horrid, barbarous intent;
In full pursuit of unexperienced hope,
Fluttering along the flowery path of youth:
Or steeped in disappointment's bitterness,
The fevered cup that guilt must ever drink,

When parched and fainting on the road of ill ;
Beggar and king, the clown and haughty lord ;
The venerable sage, and empty fop ;
The ancient matron, and the rosy bride ;
The virgin chaste, and shrivelled harlot vile ;
The savage fierce, and man of science mild :
The good and evil, in a moment, all
Were changed, corruptible to incorrupt,
And mortal to immortal, ne'er to change.

And now, descending from the bowers of heaven,
Soft airs o'er all the earth, spreading, were heard,
And hallelujahs sweet, the harmony
Of righteous souls that came to repossess
Their long-neglected bodies ; and anon
Upon the ear fell horribly the sound
Of cursing, and the yells of damned despair,
Uttered by felon spirits that the trump
Had summoned from the burning glooms of hell,
To put their bodies on, reserved for woe.

Now starting up among the living changed,
Appeared innumerable the risen dead.
Each particle of dust was claimed : the turf,
For ages trod beneath the careless foot
Of men, rose, organised in human form ;
The monumental stones were rolled away ;
The doors of death were opened ; and in the dark
And loathsome vault, and silent charnel-house,
Moving, were heard the mouldered bones that sought
Their proper place. Instinctive, every soul
Flew to its clayey part : from grass-grown mould,
The nameless spirit took its ashes up,
Reanimate ; and, merging from beneath

The flattering marble, undistinguished rose
The great, nor heeded once the lavish rhyme,
And costly pomp of sculptured garnish vain.
The Memphian mummy, that from age to age
Descending, bought and sold a thousand times,
In hall of curious antiquary stowed,
Wrapped in mysterious weeds, the wondrous theme
Of many an erring tale, shook off its rags;
And the brown son of Egypt stood beside
The European, his last purchaser.
In vale remote, the hermit rose, surprised
At crowds that rose around him, where he thought
His slumbers had been single; and the bard,
Who fondly covenanted with his friend,
To lay his bones beneath the sighing bough
Of some old lonely tree, rising, was pressed
By multitudes that claimed their proper dust
From the same spot; and he that, richly hearsed,
With gloomy garniture of purchased woe,
Embalmed, in princely sepulchre was laid,
Apart from vulgar men, built nicely round
And round by the proud heir, who blushed to think
His father's lordly clay should ever mix
With peasant dust—saw by his side awake
The clown that long had slumbered in his arms.

The family tomb, to whose devouring mouth
Descended sire and son, age after age,
In long unbroken hereditary line,
Poured forth at once the ancient father rude,
And all his offspring of a thousand years.
Refreshed from sweet repose, awoke the man
Of charitable life—awoke and sang:
And from his prison-house, slowly and sad,

As if unsatisfied with holding near
Communion with the earth, the miser drew
His carcass forth, and gnashed his teeth, and howled,
Unsolaced by his gold and silver then.
From simple stone in lonely wilderness,
That hoary lay, o'erlettered by the hand
Of oft-frequenting pilgrim, who had taught
The willow-tree to weep, at morn and even,
Over the sacred spot,—the martyr saint,
To song of seraph harp, triumphant, rose,
Well-pleased that he had suffered to the death.
“The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,”
As sung the bard by Nature’s hand anointed,
In whose capacious, giant numbers, rolled
The passions of Old Time—fell lumbering down.
All cities fell, and every work of man,
And gave their portion forth of human dust,
Touched by the mortal finger of decay.
Tree, herb, and flower, and every fowl of heaven,
And fish, and animal, the wild and tame,
Forthwith dissolving, crumbled into dust.

Alas ! ye sons of strength, ye ancient oaks,
Ye holy pines, ye elms and cedars tall,
Like towers of God, far seen on Carmel mount
Or Lebanon, that waved your boughs on high,
And laughed at all the winds,—your hour was come !
Ye laurels, ever green, and bays, that wont
To wreath the patriot and the poet’s brow ;
Ye myrtle bowers, and groves of sacred shade,
Where music ever sang, and Zephyr fanned
His airy wing, wet with the dews of life,
And Spring for ever smiled, the fragrant haunt
Of Love, and Health, and ever-dancing Mirth,—

Alas ! how suddenly your verdure died,
And ceased your minstrelsy, to sing no more !
Ye flowers of beauty, pencilled by the hand
Of God, who annually renewed your birth,
To gem the virgin robes of nature chaste,
Ye smiling-featured daughters of the sun !
Fairer than queenly bride, by Jordan's stream
Leading your gentle lives, retired, unseen ;
Or on the sainted cliffs of Zion hill
Wandering, and holding with the heavenly dew,
In holy revelry your nightly loves,
Watched by the stars, and offering, every morn,
Your incense grateful both to God and man ;—
Ye lovely, gentle things, alas ! no spring
Shall ever wake you now ! ye withered all,
All in a moment drooped, and on your roots
The grasp of everlasting winter seized !
Children of song, ye birds that dwelt in air,
And stole your notes from angels' lyres, and first
In levee of the morn, with eulogy
Ascending, hailed the advent of the dawn ;
Or, roosted on the pensive evening bough,
In melancholy numbers, sang the day
To rest ; your little wings, failing, dissolved
In middle air, and on your harmony
Perpetual silence fell ! Nor did his wing,
That sailed in track of gods sublime, and fanned
The sun, avail the eagle then ; quick smitten,
His plumage withered in meridian height,
And in the valley sank the lordly bird,
A clod of clay. Before the ploughman fell
His steers, and in midway the furrow left.
The shepherd saw his flocks around him turn
To dust. Beneath his rider fell the steed



*"Palmyra's dead, where Desolation sat
From age to age."*

To ruins ; and the lion in his den
Grew cold and stiff, or in the furious chase,
With timid fawn, that scarcely missed his paws.
On earth, no living thing was seen but men,
New changed, or rising from the opening tomb.

Athens, and Rome, and Babylon, and Tyre,
And she that sat on Thames, queen of the seas,
Cities once famed on earth, convulsed through all
Their mighty ruins, threw their millions forth.
Palmyra's dead, where Desolation sat
From age to age, well pleased, in solitude
And silence, save when traveller's foot, or owl
Of night, or fragment mouldering down to dust,
Broke faintly on his desert ear,—awoke.
And Salem, holy city, where the Prince
Of Life, by death, a second life secured
To man, and with Him from the grave, redeemed,
A chosen number brought, to retinue
His great ascent on high, and give sure pledge
That death was foiled,—her generations now
Gave up, of kings, and priests, and Pharisees :
Nor even the Sadducee, who fondly said,
No morn of resurrection e'er should come,
Could sit the summons ; to his ear did reach
The trumpet's voice, and, ill prepared for what
He oft had proved should never be, he rose
Reluctantly, and on his face began
To burn eternal shame. ' The cities, too,
Of old ensepulchred beneath the Flood,
Or deeply slumbering under mountains huge,
That Earthquake, servant of the wrath of God,
Had on their wicked population thrown ;
And marts of busy trade, long ploughed and sown,

By history unrecorded, or the song
Of bard, yet not forgotten their wickedness
In heaven,—poured forth their ancient multitudes,
That vainly wished their sleep had never broke.
From battle-fields, where men by millions met
To murder each his fellow, and make sport
To kings and heroes—things long since forgot—
Innumerable armies rose, unbannered all,
Unpanoplied, unpraised ; nor found a prince
Or general then, to answer for their crimes.
The hero's slaves, and all the scarlet troops
Of Antichrist, and all that fought for rule,—
Many high-sounding names, familiar once
On earth, and praised exceedingly, but now
Familiar most in hell, their dungeon fit,
Where they may war eternally with God's
Almighty thunderbolts, and win them pangs
Of keener woe,—saw, as they sprang to life,
The widow and the orphan ready stand,
And helpless virgin, ravished in their sport,
To plead against them at the coming doom.
The Roman legions, boasting once, how loud !
Of liberty, and fighting bravely o'er
The torrid and the frigid zone, the sands
Of burning Egypt, and the frozen hills
Of snowy Albion, to make mankind
Their thralls, untaught that he who made or kept
A slave, could ne'er himself be truly free,—
That morning gathered up their dust, which lay
Wide-scattered over half the globe ; nor saw
Their eagle banners then. Sennacherib's hosts,
Embattled once against the sons of God,
With insult bold, quick as the noise of mirth
And revelry sank in their drunken camp,

When death's dark angel, at the dead of night,
Their vitals touched, and made each pulse stand still,—
Awoke in sorrow; and the multitudes
Of Gog, and all the fated crew that warred
Against the chosen saints, in the last days,
At Armageddon, when the Lord came down,
Mustering His host on Israel's holy hills,
And from the treasures of His snow and hail
Rained terror, and confusion rained, and death,
And gave to all the beasts and fowls of heaven
Of captains' flesh, and blood of men of war,
A feast of many days—revived, and, doomed
To second death, stood in Hamonah's vale.

Nor yet did all that fell in battle rise,
That day, to wailing. Here and there were seen
The patriot bands that from his guilty throne
The despot tore, unshackled nations, made
The prince respect the people's laws, drove back
The wave of proud invasion, and rebuked
The frantic fury of the multitude
Rebelled, and fought and fell for liberty
Right understood—true heroes in the speech
Of heaven, where words express the thoughts of him
Who speaks. Not undistinguished these, though few,
That morn arose with joy and melody.

All woke—the north and south gave up their dead.
The caravan, that in mid-journey sank
With all its merchandise, expected long,
And long forgot, engulfed beneath the tide
Of death, that the wild Spirit of the winds
Swept, in his wrath, along the wilderness,
In the wide desert woke, and saw all calm

Around, and populous with risen men:
Nor of his relics thought the pilgrim then,
Nor merchant, of his silks and spiceries.

And he, far voyaging from home and friends,
Too curious with a mortal eye to peep
Into the secrets of the Pole, forbid
By nature, whom fierce Winter seized, and froze
To death, and wrapped in winding-sheet of ice,
And sang the requiem of his shivering ghost
With the loud organ of his mighty winds,
And on his memory threw the snow of ages,—
Felt the long absent warmth of life return,
And shook the frozen mountain from his bed.

All rose, of every age, of every clime.
Adam and Eve, the great progenitors
Of all mankind, fair as they seemed that morn
When first they met in Paradise, unfallen,
Uncursed,—from ancient slumber broke, where once
Euphrates rolled his stream; and by them stood,
In stature equal, and in soul as large,
Their last posterity, though poets sang,
And sages proved them far degenerate.

Blest sight! not unobserved by angels, nor
Unpraised,—that day, 'mong men of every tribe
And hue, from those who drank of Tenglio's stream
To those who nightly saw the hermit Cross,
In utmost south retired,—rising, were seen
The fair and ruddy sons of Albion's land,
How glad!—not those who travelled far and sailed
To purchase human flesh, or wreath the yoke
Of vassalage on savage liberty,

Or suck large fortune from the sweat of slaves ;
Or, with refinèd knavery, to cheat,
Politely villanous, untutored men
Out of their property ; or gather shells,
Intaglios rude, old pottery, and store
Of mutilated gods of stone, and scraps
Of barbarous epitaphs defaced, to be
Among the learned the theme of warm debate,
And infinite conjecture, sagely wrong !—
But those, denied to self, to earthly fame
Denied, and earthly wealth ; who kindred left,
And home, and ease, and all the cultured joys,
Conveniences, and delicate delights,
Of ripe society ; in the great cause
Of man's salvation greatly valorous—
The warriors of Messiah, messengers
Of peace, and light, and life, whose eye, unscaled,
Saw up the path of immortality,
Far into bliss ; saw men, immortal men,
Wide wandering from the way ; eclipsed in night,
Dark, moonless, moral night ; living like beasts,
Like beasts descending to the grave, untaught
Of life to come, unsanctified, unsaved ;
Who strong, though seeming weak ; who warlike, though
Unarmed with bow and sword ; appearing mad,
Though sounder than the schools alone e'er made
The doctor's head ; devote to God and truth,
And sworn to man's eternal weal—beyond
Repentance sworn, or thought of turning back ;
And casting far behind all earthly care,
All countryships, all national regards
And enmities, all narrow bournes of state
And selfish policy ; beneath their feet
Treading all fear of opposition down,

All fear of danger, of reproach all fear,
And evil tongues—went forth, from Britain went,
A noiseless band of heavenly soldiery,
From out the armoury of God equipped,
Invincible, to conquer sin ; to blow
The trump of freedom in the despot's ear ;
To tell the bruted slave his manhood high,
His birthright liberty, and in his hand
To put the right of manumission, signed
By God's own signature ; to drive away
From earth the dark, infernal legionry
Of superstition, ignorance, and hell ;
High on the pagan hills, where Satan sat,
Encamped, and o'er the subject kingdoms threw
Perpetual night, to plant Immanuel's cross,
The ensign of the Gospel, blazing round
Immortal truth ; and, in the wilderness
Of human waste, to sow eternal life ;
And from the rock where Sin, with horrid yell,
Devoured its victims unredeemed, to raise
The melody of grateful hearts to heaven :
To falsehood, truth ; to pride, humility ;
To insult, meekness ; pardon, to revenge ;
To stubborn prejudice, unwearied zeal ;
To censure, unaccusing minds ; to stripes,
Long-suffering ; to want of all things, hope ;
To death, assurèd faith of life to come,
Opposing. These great worthies, rising, shone
Through all the tribes and nations of mankind,
Like Hesper, glorious once among the stars
Of twilight ; and around them flocking stood,
Arrayed in white, the people they had saved.

Great Ocean, too, that morning, thou the call

Of restitution heardst, and reverently
To the last trumpet's voice in silence listened.
Great Ocean! strongest of creation's sons,
Unconquerable, unreposed, untired,
That rolled the wild, profound, eternal bass,
In nature's anthem, and made music, such
As pleased the ear of God! original,
Unmarred, unfaded work of Deity,
And unburlesqued by mortal's puny skill;
From age to age enduring and unchanged,
Majestical, inimitable, vast;
Loud uttering satire, day and night, on each
Succeeding race, and little pompous work
Of man. Unfallen, religious, holy Sea!
Thou bowedst thy glorious head to none, fearedst
 none,
Heardst none, to none didst honour, but to God
Thy Maker, only worthy to receive
Thy great obeisance. Undiscovered Sea!
Into thy dark, unknown, mysterious caves,
And secret haunts, unfathomably deep,
Beneath all visible retired, none went
And came again, to tell the wonders there.
Tremendous Sea! what time thou liftedst up
Thy waves on high, and with thy winds and storms
Strange pastime took, and shook thy mighty sides
Indignantly, the pride of navies fell;
Beyond the arm of help, unheard, unseen,
Sank friend and foe, with all their wealth and war;
And on thy shores men of a thousand tribes,
Polite and barbarous, trembling stood, amazed,
Confounded, terrified, and thought vast thoughts
Of ruin, boundlessness, omnipotence,
Infinitude, eternity; and thought,

And wondered still, and grasped, and grasped, and
grasped

Again ; beyond her reach exerting all
The soul, to take thy great idea in,
To comprehend incomprehensible ;
And wondered more, and felt their littleness.
Self-purifying, unpolluted Sea !
Lover unchangeable, thy faithful breast
For ever heaving to the lovely moon,
That like a shy and holy virgin, robed
In saintly white, walked nightly in the heavens,
And to thy everlasting serenade
Gave gracious audience ; nor was wooed in vain.
That morning, thou, that slumbered not before,
Nor slept, great Ocean ! laid thy waves to rest,
And hushed thy mighty minstrelsy ; no breath
Thy deep composure stirred, no fin, no oar ;
Like beauty newly dead, so calm, so still,
So lovely, thou, beneath the light that fell
From angel-chariots sentinelled on high,
Reposed, and listened, and saw thy living change,
Thy dead arise. Charybdis listened, and Scylla ;
And savage Euxine on the Thracian beach
Lay motionless ; and every battle-ship
Stood still, and every ship of merchandise,
And all that sailed, of every name, stood still.
Even as the ship of war, full-fledged, and swift,
Like some fierce bird of prey, bore on her foe,
Opposing with as fell intent, the wind
Fell withered from her wings that idly hung ;
The stormy bullet, by the cannon thrown
Uncivilly against the heavenly face
Of men, half sped, sank harmlessly, and all
Her loud, uncircumcised, tempestuous crew—



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And to thy everlasting serenade
Gave gracious audience.”*

How ill prepared to meet their God!—were changed,
Unchangeable; the pilot at the helm
Was changed, and the rough captain, while he mouthed
The huge enormous oath. The fisherman,
That in his boat expectant watched his lines,
Or mended on the shore his net, and sang,
Happy in thoughtlessness, some careless air,
Heard Time depart, and felt the sudden change.
In solitary deep, far out from land,
Or steering from the port with many a cheer;
Or, while returning from long voyage, fraught
With lusty wealth, rejoicing to have escaped
The dangerous main, and plagues of foreign climes,
The merchant quaffed his native air, refreshed;
And saw his native hills in the sun's light
Serenely rise; and thought of meetings glad,
And many days of ease and honour spent
Among his friends—unwarnèd man! even then
The knell of Time broke on his reverie,
And in the twinkling of an eye his hopes,
All earthly, perished all. As sudden rose,
From out their watery beds, the Ocean's dead,
Renewed, and on the unstirring billows stood,
From pole to pole, thick covering all the sea—
Of every nation blent, and every age.

Wherever slept one grain of human dust,
Essential organ of a human soul,
Wherever tossed—obedient to the call
Of God's omnipotence, it hurried on
To meet its fellow particles, revived,
Rebuilt, in union indestructible.
No atom of his spoils remained to Death.
From his strong arm, by stronger arm released,

Immortal now in soul and body both,
Beyond his reach, stood all the sons of men,
And saw, behind, his valley lie, unfeared.

O Death! with what an eye of desperate lust,
From out thy emptied vaults, thou then didst look
After the risen multitudes of all
Mankind! Ah! thou hadst been the terror long,
And murderer, of all of woman born.
None could escape thee! In thy dungeon-house,
Where darkness dwelt, and putrid loathsomeness,
And fearful silence, villanously still,
And all of horrible and deadly name—
Thou satst, from age to age, insatiate,
And drank the blood of men, and gorged their flesh,
And with thy iron teeth didst grind their bones
To powder, treading out beneath thy feet
Their very names and memories! The blood
Of nations could not slake thy parchèd throat;
No bribe could buy thy favour for an hour,
Or mitigate thy ever-cruel rage
For human prey; gold, beauty, virtue, youth,
Even helpless, swaddled innocency, failed
To soften thy heart of stone: the infant's blood
Pleased well thy taste, and, while the mother wept,
Bereaved by thee, lonely and waste in woe,
Thy ever-grinding jaws devoured her too!

Each son of Adam's family beheld,
Where'er he turned, whatever path of life
He trode, thy goblin form before him stand,
Like trusty old assassin, in his aim
Steady and sure as eye of destiny,
With scythe, and dart, and strength invincible

Equipped, and ever menacing his life.
He turned aside, he drowned himself in sleep,
In wine, in pleasure ; travelled, voyaged, sought
Receipts for health from all he met ; betook
To business, speculate, retired ; returned
Again to active life, again retired :
Returned, retired again : prepared to die,
Talked of thy nothingness, conversed of life
To come, laughed at his fears, filled up the cup,
Drank deep, refrained ; filled up, refrained again ;
Planned, built him round with splendour, won applause,
Made large alliances with men and things ;
Read deep in science and philosophy,
To fortify his soul ; heard lectures prove
The present ill, and future good ; observed
His pulse beat regular ; extended hope ;
Thought, dissipated thought, and thought again,
Indulged, abstained, and tried a thousand schemes,
To ward thy blow, or hide thee from his eye ;
But still thy gloomy terrors, dipped in sin,
Before him frowned, and withered all his joy.
Still, feared and hated thing ! thy ghostly shape
Stood in his avenues of fairest hope ;
Unmannerly and uninvited, crept
Into his haunts of most select delight.
Still, on his halls of mirth, and banqueting,
And revelry, thy shadowy hand was seen
Writing thy name of—Death ! Vile worm ! that
gnawed
The root of all his happiness terrene, the gall
Of all his sweet, the thorn of every rose
Of earthly bloom, cloud of his noonday sky,
Frost of his spring, sigh of his loudest laugh,
Dark spot on every form of loveliness,

Rank smell among his rarest spiceries,
Harsh dissonance of all his harmony,
Reserve of every promise, and the If
Of all to-morrows!—now, beyond thy vale,
Stood all the ransomed multitude of men,
Immortal all; and in their visions saw
Thy visage grin no more. Great payment day!
Of all thou ever conquered, none was left
In thy unpeopled realms, so populous once.
He, at whose girdle hang the keys of death
And life, not bought but with the blood of Him
Who wears—the eternal Son of God—that morn
Dispelled the cloud that sat so long, so thick,
So heavy o'er thy vale; opened all thy doors,
Unopened before, and set thy prisoners free.
Vain was resistance, and to follow vain.
In thy unveiled caves and solitudes
Of dark and dismal emptiness, thou satst,
Rolling thy hollow eyes, disabled thing!
Helpless, despised, unpitied, and unfear'd,
Like some fallen tyrant, chained in sight of all
The people; from thee dropped thy pointless dart;
Thy terrors withered all; thy ministers,
Annihilated, fell before thy face;
And on thy maw eternal hunger seized.

Nor yet, sad monster! wast thou left alone;
In thy dark den some phantoms still remained.
Ambition, Vanity, and earthly Fame;
Swollen Ostentation, meagre Avarice,
Mad Superstition, smooth Hypocrisy,
And Bigotry intolerant, and Fraud,
And wilful Ignorance, and sullen Pride;
Hot Controversy, and the subtle ghost

Of vain Philosophy, and worldly Hope,
And sweet-lipped, hollow-hearted Flattery—
All these, great personages once on earth,
And not unfollowed, nor unpraised, were left,
Thy ever unredeemed, and with thee driven
To Erebus, through whose uncheerèd wastes
Thou mayest chase them, with thy broken scythe
Fetching vain strokes, to all eternity,
Unsatisfied, as men who, in the days
Of time, their unsubstantial forms pursued.

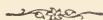
THE COURSE OF TIME

BOOK VIII.

ARGUMENT.

Countless myriads of the human race cover earth, air, and sea.—All in the last pause of expectation.—The scene, and the aspects of men described.—No parallel to this assembly in the annals of Time.—Men in this congregation stripped of all human distinctions.—Men discover the folly of their favourite pursuits:—The Antiquarian—the Monk—the Controversialist—the Bigot.—Denunciation of Bigotry:—The cruel nature of Persecution:—the Inquisition, her favourite retreat:—her day of retribution arrived.—The Man of Sin:—Falsehood of his absolutions and passports to Paradise.—Miserable state of those who trusted to Priests, and prayed by proxy.—The day of Resurrection terminates all the pleasures of sin.—The Epicure.—The Sceptic.—The Tyrant.—The Man of Fashion:—his pursuits in Time.—The fine lady contrasted with the virtuous matron.—The Lunatic:—Causes of Madness.—Story of a seduced girl.—The corrupt Judge:—The lawyer who employed falsehood and sophistry.—The unfair trader—Custom will not excuse sin.—The indolent man finds no neutral ground.—The lying quack—and the dealer in fiction.—The Duellist—and Suicide.—Erroneous notions of honour and duty that prevailed among men.—The Hypocrite:—Value of a good name:—Virtue often robbed by Vice of her good name.—Rumour:—The infamous tales she spread in Time.—Slander:—Character of the Slanderer.—The false Priest:—His snares for souls:—His life worse than his doctrines.—All the ordinary temptations of Time now removed.—Envy still finds food.—The envious man:—Critics.—Envy as seen in the place of darkness.—How men, believing in wrath to come, persisted in the way that led to perdition.—Faith:—its nature:—The faith that was to salvation.—False and wicked reasonings on man's moral powers and capacities, and on faith.—The entire freedom of the human will asserted.

THE COURSE OF TIME.



BOOK VIII.

REANIMATED now, and dressed in robes
 Of everlasting wear, in the last pause
 Of expectation, stood the human race,
 Buoyant in air, or covering shore and sea,
 From east to west, thick as the earèd grain,
 In golden autumn waved, from field to field,
 Profuse, by Nilus' fertile wave, while yet
 Earth was, and men were in her valleys seen.

Still all was calm in heaven. Nor yet appeared
 The Judge, nor aught appeared, save here and there,
 On wing of golden plumage borne at will,
 A curious angel, that from out the skies
 Now glanced a look on man, and then retired.
 As calm was all on earth. The ministers
 Of God's unsparing vengeance waited, still
 Unbid. No sun, no moon, no star gave light.
 A blessed and holy radiance, travelled far
 From day original, fell on the face



Of men, and every countenance revealed :
Unpleasant to the bad, whose visages
Had lost all guise of seeming happiness,
With which on earth such pains they took to hide
Their misery in. On their grim features, now
The plain unvisored index of the soul,
The true untampered witness of the heart,
No smile of hope, no look of vanity
Beseeching for applause, was seen ; no scowl
Of self-important, all-despising pride,
That once upon the poor and needy fell,
Like winter on the unprotected flower,
Withering their very being to decay.
No jesting mirth, no wanton leer, was seen ;
No sullen lower of braggart fortitude
Defying pain ; nor anger, nor revenge :
But fear instead, and terror, and remorse ;
And chief, one passion, to its answering, shaped
The features of the damned, and in itself
Summed all the rest—unutterable despair.

What on the righteous shone of foreign light,
Was all redundant day they needed not.
For as, by nature, Sin is dark, and loves
The dark, still hiding from itself in gloom,
And in the darkest hell is still itself
The darkest hell, and the severest woe
Where all is woe ; so Virtue, ever fair !
Doth, by a sympathy as strong as binds
Two equal hearts, well-pleased, in wedded love,
For ever seek the light, for ever seek
All fair and lovely things, all beauteous forms,
All images of excellence and truth :
And from her own essential being, pure

As flows the fount of life that spirits drink,
Doth to herself give light ; nor from her beams,
As native to her as her own existence,
Can be divorced, nor of her glory shorn—
Which now from every feature of the just,
Divinely rayed ; yet not from all alike :
In measure equal to the soul's advance
In virtue, was the lustre of the face.

It was a strange assembly : none of all
That congregation vast could recollect
Aught like it in the history of man.
No badge of outward state was seen, no mark
Of age, or rank, or national attire,
Or robe professional, or air of trade.
Untitled stood the man that once was called
My lord, unserved, unfollowed ; and the man
Of tithes, right reverend in the dialect
Of Time addressed, ungowned, unbeneficed,
Uncorpulent ; nor now, from him who bore,
With ceremonious gravity of step,
And face of borrowed holiness o'erlaid,
The ponderous book before the awful priest,
And opened and shut the pulpit's sacred gates
In style of wonderful observancy
And reverence excessive, in the beams
Of sacerdotal splendour lost, or if
Observed, comparison ridiculous scarce
Could save the little, pompous, humble man
From laughter of the people—not from him
Could be distinguished then the priest untithed.
None levees held, those marts where princely smiles
Were sold for flattery and obeisance mean,
Unfit from man to man ; none came or went,

None wished to draw attention, none was poor,
None rich, none young, none old, deformed none ;
None sought for place or favour, none had aught
To give, none could receive, none ruled, none served ;
No king, no subject was ; unscutcheoned all,
Uncrowned, unplumed, unhelmed, unpedigreed,
Unlaced, uncoroneted, unbestarred.
Nor countryman was seen, nor citizen ;
Republican, nor humble advocate
Of monarchy ; nor idol-worshipper,
Nor beaded Papist, nor Mahometan ;
Episcopalian none, nor Presbyter ;
Nor Lutheran, nor Calvinist, nor Jew,
Nor Greek, nor sectary of any name.
Nor of those persons that loud title bore,
Most high and mighty, most magnificent,
Most potent, most august, most worshipful,
Most eminent—words of great pomp, that pleased
The ear of vanity, and made the worms
Of earth mistake themselves for gods—could one
Be seen to claim these phrases obsolete.

It was a congregation vast of men :
Of unappendaged and unvarnished men ;
Of plain, unceremonious human beings,
Of all but moral character bereaved.
His vice or virtue, now, to each remained
Alone. All else, with their grave-clothes, men had
Put off, as badges worn by mortal, not
Immortal man ; alloy that could not pass
The scrutiny of Death's refining fires ;
Dust of Time's wheels, by multitudes pursued
Of fools that shouted—Gold ! fair-painted fruit,
At which the ambitious idiot jumped, while men

Of wiser mood immortal harvests reaped ;
Weeds of the human garden, sprung from earth's
Adulterate soil, unfit to be transplanted,
Though by the moral botanist, too oft,
For plants of heavenly seed mistaken and nursed ;
Mere chaff that Virtue, when she rose from earth,
And waved her wings to gain her native heights,
Drove from the verge of being, leaving vice
No mask to hide her in ; base-born of Time,
In which God claimed no property, nor had
Prepared for them a place in heaven or hell.
Yet did these vain distinctions, now forgot,
Bulk largely in the filmy eye of Time,
And were exceeding fair, and lured to death
Immortal souls. But they were past, for all
Ideal now was past ; reality
Alone remained ; and good and bad, redeemed
And unredeemed, distinguished sole the sons
Of men. Each, to his proper self reduced,
And undisguised, was what his seeming showed.

The man of earthly fame, whom common men
Made boast of having seen, who scarce could pass
The ways of Time, for eager crowds that pressed
To do him homage, and pursued his ear
With endless praise, for deeds unpraised above,
And yoked their brutal natures, honoured much,
To drag his chariot on—unnoticed stood,
With none to praise him, none to flatter there.

Blushing and dumb that morning, too, was seen
The mighty reasoner, he who deeply searched
The origin of things, and talked of good
And evil much, of causes and effects,

Of mind and matter, contradicting all
That went before him, and himself, the while,
The laughing-stock of angels ; diving far
Below his depth, to fetch reluctant proof
That he himself was mad and wicked too,
When, proud and ignorant man, he meant to prove
That God had made the universe amiss,
And sketch a better plan. Ah ! foolish sage !
He could not trust the word of Heaven, nor see
The light which from the Bible blazed—that lamp
Which God threw from His palace down to earth,
To guide His wandering children home—yet leaned
His cautious faith on speculations wild,
And visionary theories absurd,
Prodigiously, deliriously absurd,
Compared with which, the most erroneous flight
That poet ever took, when warm with wine,
Was moderate conjecturing ; he saw,
Weighed in the balance of Eternity,
His lore how light, and wished, too late, that he
Had stayed at home, and learned to know himself,
And done, what peasants did, disputed less,
And more obeyed. Nor less he grieved his time
Misspent, the man of curious research,
Who travelled far through lands of hostile clime
And dangerous inhabitant, to fix
The bounds of empires past, and ascertain
The burial-place of heroes never born ;
Despising present things, and future too,
And groping in the dark unsearchable
Of finished years—by dreary ruins seen,
And dungeons damp, and vaults of ancient waste,
With spade and mattock delving deep to raise
Old vases, and dismembered idols rude ;



*“He journeyed forth,
In show of miserable poverty.”*

With matchless perseverance, spelling out
Words without sense. Poor man! he clapped his
 hands,
Enraptured, when he found a manuscript
That spoke of pagan gods; and yet forgot
The God who made the sea and sky; alas!
Forgot that trifling was a sin; stored much
Of dubious stuff, but laid no treasure up
In heaven; on mouldered columns scratched his name,
But ne'er inscribed it in the Book of Life.

Unprofitable seemed, and unapproved
That day, the sullen, self-vindictive life
Of the recluse. With crucifixes hung,
And spells, and rosaries, and wooden saints,
Like one of reason reft, he journeyed forth,
In show of miserable poverty,
And chose to beg—as if to live on sweat
Of other men had promised great reward;
On his own flesh inflicted cruel wounds;
With naked foot embraced the ice, by the hour
Said mass, and did most grievous penance vile;
And then retired to drink the filthy cup
Of secret wickedness, and fabricate
All lying wonders, by the untaught received
For revelations new. Deluded wretch!
Did he not know that the most Holy One
Required a cheerful life and holy heart?

Most disappointed in that crowd of men,
The man of subtle controversy stood,
The bigot theologian, in minute
Distinctions skilled, and doctrines un-reduced
To practice; in debate how loud! how long!

How dexterous! in Christian love how cold!
His vain conceits were orthodox alone.
The immutable and heavenly truth, revealed
By God, was nought to him. He had an art,
A kind of hellish charm, that made the lips
Of truth speak falsehood; to his liking turned
The meaning of the text; made trifles seem
The marrow of salvation; to a word,
A name, a sect, that sounded in the ear,
And to the eye so many letters showed,
But did no more—gave value infinite;
Proved still his reasoning best, and his belief,
Though propped on fancies wild as madman's dreams,
Most rational, most scriptural, most sound;
With mortal heresy denouncing all
Who in his arguments could see no force.
On points of faith, too fine for human sight,
And never understood in heaven, he placed
His everlasting hope, undoubting placed,
And died; and when he opened his ear, prepared
To hear, beyond the grave, the minstrelsy
Of bliss, he heard, alas! the wail of woe.
He proved all creeds false but his own, and found,
At last, his own most false—most false, because
He spent his time to prove all others so.

O love-destroying, cursèd Bigotry!
Cursèd in heaven, but cursèd more in hell,
Where millions curse thee, and must ever curse.
Religion's most abhorred! perdition's most
Forlorn! God's most abandoned! hell's most damned!
The infidel who turned his impious war
Against the walls of Zion, on the rock
Of ages built, and higher than the clouds,

Sinned, and received his due reward ; but she
Within her walls sinned more. Of Ignorance
Begot, her daughter, Persecution, walked
The earth, from age to age, and drank the blood
Of saints ; with horrid relish drank the blood
Of God's peculiar children, and was drunk,
And in her drunkenness dreamed of doing good.
The supplicating hand of innocence,
That made the tiger mild, and in his wrath
The lion pause—the groans of suffering most
Severe, were nought to her : she laughed at groans ;
No music pleased her more ; and no repast
So sweet to her as blood of men redeemed
By blood of Christ. Ambition's self, though mad,
And nursed on human gore, with her compared,
Was merciful. Nor did she always rage.
She had some hours of meditation, set
Apart, wherein she to her study went,
The Inquisition, model most complete
Of perfect wickedness, where deeds were done—
Deeds ! let them ne'er be named—and sat and
planned
Deliberately, and with most musing pains,
How to extremest thrill of agony
The flesh, and blood, and souls of holy men,
Her victims, might be wrought ! and when she saw
New tortures of her labouring fancy born,
She leaped for joy, and made great haste to try
Their force, well pleased to hear a deeper groan.

But now her day of mirth was passed, and come
Her day to weep, her day of bitter groans,
And sorrow unbemoaned ; the day of grief,
And wrath retributory, poured in full

On all that took her part. The Man of Sin,
The mystery of iniquity, her friend
Sincere, who pardoned sin, unpardoned still,
And in the name of God blasphemed, and did
All wicked, all abominable things,
Most abject stood, that day, by devils hissed,
And by the looks of those he murdered, scorched ;
And plagued with inward shame, that on his cheek
Burned, while his votaries, who left the earth
Secure of bliss, around him, undeceived,
Stood, undeceivable till then ; and knew,
Too late, him fallible, themselves accursed,
And all their passports and certificates
A lie: nor disappointed more, nor more
Ashamed, the Mussulman, when he saw gnash
His teeth and wail, whom he expected judge.
All these were damned for bigotry, were damned,
Because they thought that they alone served God,
And served Him most, when most they disobeyed.

Of those forlorn and sad, thou mightst have marked,
In number most innumerable, stand
The indolent: too lazy these to make
Inquiry for themselves, they stuck their faith
To some well-fatted priest, with offerings bribed
To bring them oracles of peace, and take
Into his management all the concerns
Of their eternity ; managed how well,
They knew that day ; and might have sooner known,
That the commandment was, Search, and believe
In Me, and not in man ; who leans on him,
Leans on a broken reed, that will impierce
The trusted side. I am the way, the truth,
The life, alone, and there is none besides.

This did they read, and yet refused to search,
To search what easily was found, and found
Of price uncountable. Most foolish, they
Thought God with ignorance pleased, and blinded faith
That took not root in reason, purified
With holy influence of His Spirit pure.
So, on they walked and stumbled in the light
Of noon, because they would not open their eyes.
Effect how sad of sloth! that made them risk
Their piloting to the eternal shore
To one who could mistake the lurid flash
Of hell for heaven's true star, rather than bow
The knee, and by one fervent word obtain
His guidance sure, who calls the stars by name.
They prayed by proxy, and at second-hand
Believed, and slept, and put repentance off,
Until the knock of Death awoke them, when
They saw their ignorance both, and his they paid
To bargain of their souls 'twixt them and God;
Fled, and began repentance without end.
How did they wish, that morning, as they stood
With blushing covered, they had for themselves
The Scriptures searched, had for themselves believed,
And made acquaintance with the Judge ere then!

Great day of termination to the joys
Of sin! to joys that grew on mortal boughs,
On trees whose seed fell not from heaven, whose top
Reached not above the clouds. From such alone,
The epicure took all his meals. In choice
Of morsels for the body, nice he was,
And scrupulous, and knew all wines by smell
Or taste; and every composition knew
Of cookery; but grossly drank, unskilled,

The cup of spiritual pollution up,
That sickened his soul to death, while yet his eyes
Stood out with fat. His feelings were his guide:
He ate, and drank, and slept, and took all joys,
Forbid and unforbid, as impulse urged,
Or appetite; nor asked his reason why.
He said he followed Nature still, but lied;
For she was temperate and chaste, he full
Of wine and all adultery; her face
Was holy, most unholy his; her eye
Was pure, his shot unhallowed fire; her lips
Sang praise to God, his uttered oaths profane;
Her breath was sweet, his rank with foul debauch.
Yet pleaded he a kind and feeling heart,
Even when he left a neighbour's bed defiled.
Like migratory fowls that flocking sailed
From isle to isle, steering by sense alone,
Whither the clime their liking best besemed;
So he was guided, so he moved through good
And evil, right and wrong, but ah! to fate
All different: they slept in dust, unpained;
He rose that day, to suffer endless pain.

Cured of his unbelief, the sceptic stood,
Who doubted of his being while he breathed;
Than whom, glossography itself, that spoke
Huge folios of nonsense every hour,
And left, surrounding every page, its marks
Of prodigal stupidity, scarce more
Of folly raved. The tyrant, too, who sat
In grisly council, like a spider couched,
With ministers of locust countenance,
And made alliances to rob mankind,
And Holy termed—for still beneath a name

Of pious sound, the wicked sought to veil
Their crimes—forgetful of his right divine,
Trembled, and owned oppression was of hell:
Nor did the uncivil robber, who unpursed
The traveller on the highway, and cut
His throat, anticipate severer doom.

In that assembly there was one, who, while
Beneath the sun, aspired to be a fool;
In different ages known by different names,
Not worth repeating here. Be this enough:
With scrupulous care exact he walked the rounds
Of fashionable duty; laughed when sad;
When merry, wept; deceiving, was deceived;
And flattering, flattered. Fashion was his god:
Obsequiously he fell before its shrine,
In slavish plight, and trembled to offend.
If graveness suited, he was grave; if else,
He travailed sorely, and made brief repose,
To work the proper quantity of sin;
In all submissive, to its changing shape,
Still changing, girded he his vexèd frame,
And laughter made to men of sounder head.
Most circumspect he was of bows, and nods,
And salutations; and most seriously
And deeply meditated he of dress;
And in his dreams saw lace and ribbons fly.
His soul was nought; he damned it, every day,
Unceremoniously. Oh! fool of fools!
Pleased with a painted smile, he fluttered on,
Like fly of gaudy plume, by fashion driven,
As faded leaves by autumn's wind, till Death
Put forth his hand and drew him out of sight.
Oh! fool of fools! polite to man; to God

Most rude: yet had he many rivals, who,
Age after age, great striving made to be
Ridiculous, and to forget they had
Immortal souls, that day remembered well.

As rueful stood his other half, as wan
Of cheek. Small her ambition was, but strange.
The distaff, needle, all domestic cares,
Religion, children, husband, home, were things
She could not bear the thought of, bitter drugs
That sickened her soul. The house of wanton mirth
And revelry, the mask, the dance, she loved,
And in their service soul and body spent
Most cheerfully. A little admiration,
Or true or false, no matter which, pleased her,
And o'er the wreck of fortune lost, and health,
And peace, and an eternity of bliss
Lost, made her sweetly smile. She was convinced
That God had made her greatly out of taste;
And took much pains to make herself anew.
Bedaubed with paint, and hung with ornaments
Of curious selection, gandy toy!
A show unpaid for, paying to be seen!
As beggar by the way, most humbly asking
The alms of public gaze, she went abroad.
Folly admired, and indication gave
Of envy; cold Civility made bows,
And smoothly flattered; Wisdom shook his head,
And Laughter shaped his lip into a smile;
Sobriety did stare; Forethought grew pale;
And Modesty hung down the head and blushed;
And Pity wept, as on the frothy surge
Of fashion tossed, she passed them by, like sail
Before some devilish blast, and got no time

To think, and never thought, till on the rock
She dashed, of ruin, anguish, and despair.

Oh, how unlike this giddy thing in Time,
And at the day of judgment how unlike,
The modest, meek, retiring dame! Her house
Was ordered well, her children taught the way
Of life, who, rising up in honour, called
Her blest. Best pleased to be admired at home,
And hear, reflected from her husband's praise,
Her own, she sought no gaze of foreign eye;
His praise alone, and faithful love, and trust
Reposed, was happiness enough for her.
Yet who, that saw her pass, and heard the poor
With earnest benedictions on her steps
Attend, could from obeisance keep his eye,
Or tongue from due applause! In virtue fair,
Adorned with modesty, and matron grace
Unspeakable, and love, her face was like
The light, most welcome to the eye of man;
Refreshing most, most honoured, most desired,
Of all he saw in the dim world below.
As Morning when she shed her golden locks,
And on the dewy top of Hermon walked,
Or Zion hill; so glorious was her path.
Old men beheld, and did her reverence,
And bade their daughters look, and take from her
Example of their future life; the young
Admired, and new resolve of virtue made.
And none who was her husband asked; his air
Serene, and countenance of joy, the sign
Of inward satisfaction, as he passed
The crowd, or sat among the elders, told.
In holiness complete, and in the robes

Of saving righteousness, arrayed for heaven,
How fair that day among the fair she stood !
How lovely on the eternal hills her steps !

Restored to reason, on that morn, appeared
The lunatic, who raved in chains, and asked
No mercy when he died. Of lunacy,
Innumerable were the causes: humbled pride,
Ambition disappointed, riches lost,
And bodily disease, and sorrow, oft
By man inflicted on his brother man ;
Sorrow that made the reason drunk, and yet
Left much untasted—so the cup was filled ;
Sorrow, that like an ocean, dark, deep, rough,
And shoreless, rolled its billows o'er the soul
Perpetually, and without hope of end.

Take one example, one of female woe.
Loved by a father's and a mother's love,
In rural peace she lived, so fair, so light
Of heart, so good, and young, that reason scarce
The eye could credit, but would doubt, as she
Did stoop to pull the lily or the rose
From morning's dew, if it reality
Of flesh and blood, or holy vision, saw,
In imagery of perfect womanhood.
But short her bloom, her happiness was short.
One saw her loveliness, and, with desire
Unhallowed burning, to her ear addressed
Dishonest words: " Her favour was his life,
His heaven ; her frown, his woe, his night, his death."
With turgid phrase, thus wove in flattery's loom,
He on her womanish nature won, and age
Suspicionless ; and ruined, and forsook :



*“She lived on alms, and carried in her hand,
Some withered stalks she gathered in the spring.”*

For he a chosen villain was at heart,
And capable of deeds that durst not seek
Repentance. Soon her father saw her shame ;
His heart grew stone, he drove her forth to want
And wintry winds, and with a horrid curse
Pursued her ear, forbidding all return.

Upon a hoary cliff that watched the sea,
Her babe was found—dead. On its little cheek,
The tear that nature bade it weep, had turned
An ice-drop, sparkling in the morning beam ;
And to the turf its helpless hands were frozen.
For she, the woeful mother, had gone mad,
And laid it down, regardless of its fate,
And of her own. Yet had she many days
Of sorrow in the world, but never wept.
She lived on alms, and carried in her hand
Some withered stalks she gathered in the spring.
When any asked the cause, she smiled and said,
They were her sisters, and would come and watch
Her grave when she was dead. She never spoke
Of her deceiver, father, mother, home,
Or child, or heaven, or hell, or God ; but still
In lonely places walked, and ever gazed
Upon the withered stalks, and talked to them ;
Till wasted to the shadow of her youth,
With woe too wide to see beyond, she died—
Not unatoned for by imputed blood,
Nor by the Spirit, that mysterious works,
Unsanctified. Aloud, her father cursed
That day his guilty pride, which would not own
A daughter, whom the God of heaven and earth
Was not ashamed to call His own ; and he
Who ruined her, read from her holy look,

That pierced him with perdition manifold,
His sentence, burning with vindictive fire.

The judge that took a bribe: he who amiss
Pleaded the widow's cause, and by delay
Delaying ever, made the law at night
More intricate than at the dawn, and on
The morrow farther from a close, than when
The sun last set, till he who in the suit
Was poorest, by his emptied coffers, proved
His cause the worst; and he that had the bag
Of weights deceitful, and the balance false;
And he that with a fraudulent lip deceived
In buying or in selling—these, that morn,
Found custom no excuse for sin, and knew
Plain dealing was a virtue, but too late.
And he that was supposed to do nor good
Nor ill, surprised, could find no neutral ground,
And learned, that to do nothing was to serve
The devil, and transgress the laws of God.
The noisy quack, that by profession lied,
And uttered falsehoods of enormous size,
With countenance as grave as truth beseeemed;
And he that lied for pleasure, whom a lust
Of being heard, and making people stare,
And a most steadfast hate of silence, drove
Far wide of sacred truth, who never took
The pains to think of what he was to say,
But still made haste to speak, with weary
tongue,
Like copious stream for ever flowing on—
Read clearly in the lettered heavens, what long
Before they might have read—For every word
Of folly, you this day shall give account;



*“ This thought, but thought amiss, that of himself
He was entire proprietor ; and so
When he was tired of time, with his own hand
He opened the portals of eternity.”*

And every liar shall his portion have
Among the cursed, without the gates of life.

With groans that made no pause, lamenting there,
Were seen the duellist and suicide.
This thought, but thought amiss, that of himself
He was entire proprietor; and so,
When he was tired of time, with his own hand
He opened the portals of eternity,
And, sooner than the devils hoped, arrived
In hell. The other, of resentment quick,
And for a word, a look, a gesture, deemed
Not scrupulously exact in all respect,
Prompt to revenge, went to the cited field,
For double murder armed, his own, and his
That as himself he was ordained to love.
The first, in pagan books of early times,
Was heroism pronounced, and greatly praised.
In fashion's glossary of later days,
The last was honour called, and spirit high.
Alas! 'twas mortal spirit, honour which
Forgot to wake at the last trumpet's voice,
Bearing the signature of Time alone,
Uncurrent in Eternity, and base!
Wise men suspected this before; for they
Could never understand what honour meant,
Or why that should be honour termed, which made
Man murder man, and broke the laws of God
Most wantonly. Sometimes, indeed, the grave,
And those of Christian creed imagined, spoke
Admiringly of honour, lauding much
The noble youth, who, after many rounds
Of boxing, died; or to the pistol-shot
His breast exposed, his soul to endless pain.

But they who most admired, and understood
This honour best, and on its altar laid
Their lives, most obviously were fools; and what
Fools only and the wicked understood,
The wise agreed was some delusive shade,
That with the mist of Time should disappear.

Great day of revelation! in the grave
The hypocrite had left his mask, and stood
In naked ugliness. He was a man
Who stole the livery of the court of heaven,
To serve the devil in: in virtue's guise
Devoured the widow's house and orphan's bread;
In holy phrase transacted villanies
That common sinners durst not meddle with.
At sacred feast he sat among the saints,
And with his guilty hands touched holiest things;
And none of sin lamented more, or sighed
More deeply, or with graver countenance,
Or longer prayer, wept o'er the dying man,
Whose infant children, at the moment, he
Planned how to rob. In sermon style he bought,
And sold, and lied; and salutations made
In Scripture terms. He prayed by quantity,
And with his repetitions long and loud,
All knees were weary. With one hand he put
A penny in the urn of poverty,
And with the other took a shilling out.
On charitable lists—those trumps which told
The public ear who had in secret done
The poor a benefit, and half the alms
They told of, took themselves to keep them sounding—
He blazed his name, more pleased to have it there
Than in the Book of Life. Seest thou the man?

A serpent with an angel's voice! a grave
With flowers bestrewed! and yet few were deceived.
His virtues being overdone, his face
Too grave, his prayers too long, his charities
Too pompously attended, and his speech
Larded too frequently and out of time
With serious phraseology—were rents
That in his garments opened in spite of him,
Through which the well-accustomed eye could see
The rottenness of his heart. None deeper blushed,
As in the all-piercing light he stood exposed,
No longer herding with the holy ones.
Yet still he tried to bring his countenance
To sanctimonious seeming; but meanwhile,
The shame within, now visible to all,
His purpose balked. The righteous smiled, and even
Despair itself some signs of laughter gave,
As ineffectually he strove to wipe
His brow that inward guiltiness defiled.
Detected wretch! of all the reprobate,
None seemed maturer for the flames of hell,
Where still his face, from ancient custom, wears
A holy air, which says to all that pass
Him by, "I was a hypocrite on earth."

That was the hour which measured out to each,
Impartially, his share of reputation,
Correcting all mistakes, and from the name
Of the good man all slanders wiping off.
Good name was dear to all. Without it, none
Could soundly sleep, even on a royal bed,
Or drink with relish from a cup of gold;
And with it, on his borrowed straw, or by
The leafless hedge, beneath the open heavens,

The weary beggar took untroubled rest.
It was a music of most heavenly tone,
To which the heart leaped joyfully, and all
The spirits danced. For honest fame, men laid
Their heads upon the block, and while the axe
Descended, looked and smiled. It was of price
Invaluable. Riches, health, repose,
Whole kingdoms, life, were given for it, and he
Who got it was the winner still; and he
Who sold it durst not open his ear, nor look
On human face, he knew himself so vile.
Yet it, with all its preciousness, was due
To Virtue, and around her should have shed,
Unasked, its savoury smell; but Vice—deformed
Itself, and ugly, and of flavour rank—
To rob fair Virtue of so sweet an incense,
And with it to anoint and salve its own
Rotten ulcers, and perfume the path that led
To death, strove daily by a thousand means:
And oft succeeded to make Virtue sour
In the world's nostrils, and its loathly self
Smell sweetly. Rumour was the messenger
Of defamation, and so swift that none
Could be the first to tell an evil tale;
And was withal so infamous for lies,
That he who of her sayings on his creed
The fewest entered, was deemed wisest man.
The fool, and many who had credit, too,
For wisdom, grossly swallowed all she said,
Unsifted; and although, at every word,
They heard her contradict herself, and saw
Hourly they were imposed upon and mocked,
Yet still they ran to hear her speak, and stared,
And wondered much, and stood aghast, and said

It could not be ; and while they blushed for shame
At their own faith, and seemed to doubt, believed,
And whom they met, with many sanctions, told.
So did experience fail to teach ; so hard
It was to learn this simple truth, confirmed
At every corner by a thousand proofs,
That common fame most impudently lied.

'Twas Slander filled her mouth with lying words ;
Slander, the foulest whelp of Sin. The man
In whom this spirit entered was undone.
His tongue was set on fire of hell ; his heart
Was black as death ; his legs were faint with haste
To propagate the lie his soul had framed ;
His pillow was the peace of families
Destroyed, the sigh of innocence reproached,
Broken friendships, and the strife of brotherhoods.
Yet did he spare his sleep, and hear the clock
Number the midnight watches, on his bed
Devising mischief more ; and early rose,
And made most hellish meals of good men's names.

From door to door you might have seen him speed,
Or placed amidst a group of gaping fools,
And whispering in their ears with his foul lips.
Peace fled the neighbourhood in which he made
His haunts ; and, like a moral pestilence,
Before his breath the healthy shoots and blooms
Of social joy and happiness decayed.
Fools only in his company were seen,
And those forsaken of God, and to themselves
Given up. The prudent shunned him and his house
As one who had a deadly moral plague.
And fain would all have shunned him at the Day

Of Judgment ; but in vain. All who gave ear
With greediness, or wittingly their tongues
Made herald to his lies, around him wailed ;
While on his face, thrown back by injured men,
In characters of ever-blushing shame,
Appeared ten thousand slanders, all his own.

Among the accursed—who sought a hiding-place
In vain, from fierceness of Jehovah's rage,
And from the hot displeasure of the Lamb—
Most wretched, most contemptible, most vile—
Stood the false priest, and in his conscience felt
The fellest gnaw of the undying Worm.
And so he might, for he had on his hands
The blood of souls, that would not wipe away.
Hear what he was. He swore, in sight of God
And man, to preach his Master, Jesus Christ ;
Yet preached himself : he swore that love of souls
Alone had drawn him to the church ; yet strewed
The path that led to hell with tempting flowers,
And in the ear of sinners, as they took
The way of death, he whispered peace : he swore
Away all love of lucre, all desire
Of earthly pomp ; and yet a princely seat
He liked, and to the clink of Mammon's box
Gave most rapacious ear. His prophecies,
He swore, were from the Lord ; and yet taught lies
For gain ; with quackish ointment healed the wounds
And bruises of the soul, outside, but left
Within the pestilent matter unobserved,
To sap the moral constitution quite,
And soon to burst again, incurable.
He with untempered mortar daubed the walls
Of Zion, saying, Peace, when there was none.

The man who came with thirsty soul to hear
Of Jesus, went away unsatisfied ;
For he another gospel preached than Paul,
And one that had no Saviour in't ; and yet
His life was worse. Faith, charity, and love,
Humility, forgiveness, holiness,
Were words well-lettered in his Sabbath creed ;
But with his life he wrote as plain, Revenge,
Pride, tyranny, and lust of wealth and power
Inordinate, and lewdness unashamed.
He was a wolf in clothing of the lamb,
That stole into the fold of God, and on
The blood of souls, which he did sell to death,
Grew fat ; and yet, when any would have turned
Him out, he cried, " Touch not the priest of God."
And that he was anointed, fools believed ;
But knew, that day, he was the devil's priest,
Anointed by the hands of Sin and Death,
And set peculiarly apart to ill—
While on him smoked the vials of perdition,
Poured measureless. Ah me ! what cursing then
Was heaped upon his head by ruined souls
That charged him with their murder, as he stood
With eye, of all the unredeemed, most sad,
Waiting the coming of the Son of Man !
But let me pause, for thou hast seen his place
And punishment beyond the sphere of love.

Much was removed that tempted once to sin.
Avarice no gold, no wine the drunkard, saw ;
But Envy had enough, as heretofore,
To fill his heart with gall and bitterness.
What made the man of envy what he was,
Was worth in others, vileness in himself,

A lust of praise, with undeserving deeds,
And conscious poverty of soul ; and still
It was his earnest work and daily toil,
With lying tongue, to make the noble seem
Mean as himself. On fame's high hill he saw
The laurel spread its everlasting green,
And wished to climb ; but felt his knees too weak,
And stood below, unhappy, laying hands
Upon the strong ascending gloriously
The steps of honour, bent to draw them back,
Involving oft the brightness of their path
In mists his breath had raised. Whene'er he heard,
As oft he did, of joy and happiness,
And great prosperity, and rising worth,
'Twas like a wave of wormwood o'er his soul
Rolling its bitterness. His joy was woe,
The woe of others. When from wealth to want,
From praises to reproach, from peace to strife,
From mirth to tears, he saw a brother fall,
Or virtue make a slip,—his dreams were sweet.
But chief with Slander, daughter of his own,
He took unhallowed pleasure. When she talked,
And with her filthy lips defiled the best,
His ear drew near ; with wide attention gaped
His mouth ; his eye, well-pleased, as eager gazed
As glutton, when the dish he most desired
Was placed before him ; and a horrid mirth,
At intervals, with laughter shook his sides.
The critic, too, who for a bit of bread,
In book that fell aside before the ink
Was dry, poured forth excessive nonsense, gave
Him much delight. The critics—some, but few,
Were worthy men, and earned renown which had
Immortal roots ; but most were weak and vile.

And, as a cloudy swarm of summer flies,
With angry hum and slender lance, beset
The sides of some huge animal, so did
They buzz about the illustrious man, and fain
With his immortal honour down the stream
Of fame would have descended: but, alas!
The hand of Time drove them away. They were,
Indeed, a simple race of men, who had
One only art, which taught them still to say,
Whate'er was done might have been better done;
And with this art, not ill to learn, they made
A shift to live. But sometimes, too, beneath
The dust they raised, was worth a while obscured;
And then did Envy prophesy and laugh.
O Envy! hide thy bosom, hide it deep;
A thousand snakes, with black envenomed mouths,
Nest there, and hiss, and feed through all thy heart!

Such one I saw, here interposing, said
The new-arrived, in that dark den of shame,
Whom, who hath seen shall never wish to see
Again. Before him in the infernal gloom,
That omnipresent shape of Virtue stood,
On which he ever threw his eye; and like
A cinder that had life and feeling, seemed
His face, with inward pining to be what
He could not be. As being that had burned
Continually in slow consuming fire,
Half an eternity, and was to burn
For evermore, he looked. Oh! sight to be
Forgotten! thought too horrible to think!

But say, believing in such woe to come,
Such dreadful certainty of endless pain,

Could beings of forecasting mould, as thou
Entitlest men, deliberately walk on,
Unscared, and overleap their own belief
Into the lake of ever-burning fire?

Thy tone of asking seems to make reply,
And rightly seems: They did not so believe:
Not one of all thou sawst lament and wail
In Tophet, perfectly believed the Word
Of God, else none had thither gone. Absurd,
To think that beings, made with reason, formed
To calculate, compare, choose, and reject,
By nature taught, and self, and every sense,
To choose the good and pass the evil by,
Could, with full credence of a time to come,
When all the wicked should be really damned,
And cast beyond the sphere of light and love,
Have persevered in sin! Too foolish this
For folly in its prime. Can aught that thinks
And wills, choose certain evil, and reject
Good, in his heart believing he does so?
Could man choose pain instead of endless joy?
Mad supposition, though maintained by some
Of honest mind. Behold a man condemned!
Either he ne'er inquired, and therefore he
Could not believe; or else, he carelessly
Inquired, and something other than the Word
Of God received into his cheated faith;
And therefore he did not believe, but down
To hell descended, leaning on a lie.

Faith was bewildered much by men who meant
To make it clear; so simple in itself,
A thought so rudimental and so plain,

That none by comment could it plainer make.
All faith was one. In object, not in kind,
The difference lay. The faith that saved a soul,
And that which in the common truth believed,
In essence were the same. Hear, then, what faith,
True, Christian faith, which brought salvation, was:
Belief in all that God revealed to men ;
Observe, in all that God revealed to men,
In all He promised, threatened, commanded, said,
Without exception, and without a doubt.
Who thus believed, being by the Spirit touched,
As naturally the fruits of faith produced,
Truth, temperance, meekness, holiness, and love,
As human eye from darkness sought the light.
How could he else? If he, who had firm faith
The morrow's sun should rise, ordered affairs
Accordingly ; if he, who had firm faith
That spring, and summer, and autumnal days,
Should pass away, and winter really come,
Prepared accordingly ; if he, who saw
A bolt of death approaching, turned aside
And let it pass: as surely did the man,
Who verily believed the Word of God,
Though erring whiles, its general laws obey,
Turn back from hell, and take the way to heaven.

That faith was necessary, some alleged,
Unreined and uncontrollable by will.
Invention savouring much of hell! Indeed,
It was the master-stroke of wickedness,
Last effort of Abaddon's council dark,
To make man think himself a slave to fate,
And, worst of all, a slave to fate in faith.
For thus 'twas reasoned then: From faith alone,

And from opinion, springs all action ; hence,
If faith's compelled, so is all action too:
But deeds compelled are not accountable ;
So man is not amenable to God.

Arguing, that brought such monstrous birth, though
good

It seemed, must have been false. Most false it was,
And by the Book of God condemned throughout.
We freely own that truth, when set before
The mind with perfect evidence, compelled
Belief ; but error lacked such witness still ;
And none who now lament in moral night,
The Word of God refused on evidence
That might not have been set aside as false.
To reason, try, choose, and reject, was free.
Hence God by faith acquitted, or condemned ;
Hence righteous men, with liberty of will,
Believed ; and hence, thou saw'st in Erebus
The wicked, who as freely disbelieved
What else had led them to the land of life.

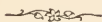
THE COURSE OF TIME

BOOK IX.

ARGUMENT.

Address to Religion:—Her attributes and functions:—Desired too late by the wicked.—The day of reward to all that in the course of time had unfeignedly obeyed the will of their Maker—Those who sought only the approbation of God have all their virtues and services remembered and repaid.—Religion alone keeps the promises given to man.—Simile, illustrative of the difficulty the Bard feels in selecting the objects of praise.—The faithful Minister:—His high station in heaven:—What he was on earth:—How commissioned:—His influences:—The blessings he conferred:—His learning:—His intellectual powers:—Praise of his surpassing worth.—His order numerous in time.—Prophets—Apostles—Reformers—appear in heaven like stars.—The true Philosopher:—His labours and beneficial investigations for mankind:—His lofty attainments, and humble affectionate Christian temper:—His glory in heaven.—The virtuous monarch.—The patriotic senator.—Early discipline of virtuous men.—Charity addressed.—The benevolent man:—His labours in various scenes.—The Bard—Philosophy and poetry.—The true Bard:—The place he fills in heaven.—The bliss of all true believers, however undistinguished on earth.—View of the changes produced by the close of Time and commencement of Eternity.—Old things passed away:—Knowledge increased:—Truth never felt till now.—Old prophecies fulfilled.—All generations of men waiting the Judgment.—The heavenly hosts descend.—The separation of the righteous from the wicked:—Judgment pronounced on Satan and his angels.—The cause of his fall.—How in time he had tempted men:—His overthrow:—His final punishment.—The Bard's lament over the decay of nature and man.—The bereaved old man:—The Lunatic.—Reflections on human life—Its mixture of good and ill.—Picture of the reprobate and the good.—Sentence of the wicked pronounced by the Seraph.—Bow that spans the heavens:—The burning words inscribed on it.

THE COURSE OF TIME.



BOOK IX.

FAIREST of those that left the calm of heaven,
And ventured down to man with words of peace,
Daughter of Grace! known by whatever name,
Religion, Virtue, Piety, or Love
Of holiness, the day of thy reward
Was come. Ah! thou wast long despised, despised
By those thou wooedst from death to endless life.
Modest and meek, in garments white as those
That seraphs wear, and countenance as mild
As Mercy looking on Repentance' tear;
With eye of purity, now darted up
To God's eternal throne; now humbly bent
Upon thyself, and weeping down thy cheek,
That glowed with universal love immense,
A tear, pure as the dews that fall in heaven;
In thy left hand the olive branch, and in
Thy right, the crown of immortality;—
With noiseless foot, thou walkedst the vales of earth,
Beseeching men, from age to age, to turn

From utter death, to turn from woe to bliss ;
Beseeching evermore, and evermore
Despised—not evermore despised, not now,
Not at the day of doom ; most lovely then,
Most honourable thou appeared, and most
To be desired. The guilty heard the song
Of thy redeemed, how loud ! and saw thy face,
How fair ! Alas ! it was too late ! the hour
Of making friends was past : thy favour then
Might not be sought : but recollection, sad
And accurate as miser counting o'er
And o'er again the sum he must lay out,
Distinctly in the wicked's ear rehearsed
Each opportunity despised and lost,
While on them gleamed thy holy look, that like
A fiery torrent went into their souls.
The day of thy reward was come, the day
Of great remuneration to thy friends,
To those, known by whatever name, who sought,
In every place, in every time, to do
Unfeignedly their Maker's will, revealed,
Or gathered else from Nature's school ; well pleased
With God's applause alone, that, like a stream
Of sweetest melody, at still of night
By wanderer heard, in their most secret ear
For ever whispered, Peace ; and, as a string
Of kindred tone awoke, their inmost soul
Responsive answered, Peace ; inquiring still
And searching, night and day, to know their duty,
When known, with undisputing trust, with love
Unquenchable, with zeal by reason's lamp
Inflamed,—performing ; and to Him, by whose
Profound, all-calculating skill alone,
Results—results even of the slightest act,

Are fully grasped, with unsuspecting faith,
All consequences leaving ; to abound
Or want, alike prepared ; who knew to be
Exalted how, and how to be abased ;
How best to live, and how to die when asked.
Their prayers sincere, their alms in secret done,
Their fightings with themselves, their abstinence
From pleasure, though by mortal eye unseen,
Their hearts of resignation to the will
Of Heaven, their patient bearing of reproach
And shame, their charity, and faith, and hope,
Thou didst remember, and in full repaid.
No bankrupt thou, who, at the bargained hour
Of payment due, sent to his creditors
A tale of losses and mischances long.
Insured by God himself, and from the stores
And treasures of His wealth, at will supplied,—
Religion ! thou alone, of all that men,
On earth, gave credit, to be reimbursed
On the other side the grave, didst keep thy word,
Thy day, and all thy promises fulfilled.

As in the mind, rich with unborrowed wealth,
Where multitudes of thoughts for utterance strive,
And all so fair, that each seems worthy first
To enter on the tongue, and from the lips
Have passage forth,—selection hesitates
Perplexed, and loses time, anxious, since all
Cannot be taken, to take the best ; and yet
Afraid, lest what be left be worthier still ;
And grieving much, where all so goodly look,
To leave rejected one, or in the rear
Let any be obscured : so did the bard,
Though not unskilled, as on that multitude

Of men who once awoke to judgment, he
Threw back reflection, hesitating pause.
For as his harp, in tone severe, had sung
What figure the most famous sinners made,
When from the grave they rose unmasked ; so did
He wish to character the good ; but yet,
Among so many, glorious all, all worth
Immortal fame, with whom begin, with whom
To end, was difficult to choose ; and long
His auditors, upon the tiptoe raised
Of expectation, might have kept, had not
His eye—for so it is in heaven, that what
Is needed always is at hand—beheld,
That moment, on a mountain near the throne
Of God, the most renowned of the redeemed,
Rejoicing : nor who first, who most, to praise,
Debated more ; but thus, with sweeter note,
Well pleased to sing, with highest eulogy,
And first, whom God applauded most, began.

With patient ear, thou now hast heard—though whiles
Aside digressing, ancient feeling turned
My lyre—what shame the wicked had, that day ;
What wailing, what remorse ; so hear, in brief,
How bold the righteous stood, the men redeemed,
How fair in virtue, and in hope how glad !
And first among the holy shone, as best
Became, the faithful minister of God.

See where he walks on yonder mount that lifts
Its summit high, on the right hand of bliss,
Sublime in glory, talking with his peers
Of the Incarnate Saviour's love, and past
Affliction lost in present joy ! see how

His face with heavenly ardour glows, and how
His hand enraptured strikes the golden lyre!
As now, conversing of the Lamb once slain,
He speaks; and now, from vines that never hear
Of winter, but in monthly harvest yield
Their fruit abundantly, he plucks the grapes
Of life! But what he was on earth, it most
Behoves to say. Elect by God himself,
Anointed by the Holy Ghost, and set
Apart to the great work of saving men;
Instructed fully in the will divine,
Supplied with grace in store, as need might ask,
And with the stamp and signature of heaven,
Truth, mercy, patience, holiness, and love,
Accredited; he was a man, by God,
The Lord, commissioned to make known to men
The eternal counsels; in his Master's name
To treat with them of everlasting things,
Of life, death, bliss, and woe; to offer terms
Of pardon, grace, and peace to the rebelled;
To teach the ignorant soul, to cheer the sad,
To bind, to loose, with all authority;
To give the feeble strength, the hopeless hope,
To help the halting, and to lead the blind;
To warn the careless, heal the sick of heart,
Arouse the indolent, and on the proud
And obstinate offender to denounce
The wrath of God. All other men, what name
Soe'er they bore, whatever office held,
If lawful held—the magistrate supreme,
Or else subordinate—were chosen by men,
Their fellows, and from men derived their power,
And were accountable, for all they did,
To men; but he alone his office held

Immediately from God, from God received
Authority, and was to none but God
Amenable. The elders of the church,
Indeed, upon him laid their hands, and set
Him visibly apart to preach the word
Of life; but this was merely outward rite
And decent ceremonial, performed
On all alike; and oft, as thou hast heard,
Performed on those God never sent; his call,
His consecration, his anointing, all
Were inward, in the conscience heard and felt.
Thus by Jehovah chosen and ordained
To take into his charge the souls of men,
And for his trust to answer at the day
Of judgment—great plenipotent of heaven,
And representative of God on earth—
Fearless of men and devils; unabashed
By sin enthroned, or mockery of a prince;
Unawed by armed legions; unseduced
By offered bribes; burning with love to souls,
Unquenchable, and mindful still of his
Great charge and vast responsibility;
High in the temple of the living God
He stood, amidst the people, and declared
Aloud the truth, the whole revealed truth,
Ready to seal it with his blood. Divine
Resemblance most complete! with mercy now
And love, his face, illumed, shone gloriously;
And frowning now indignantly, it seemed
As if offended Justice, from his eye,
Streamed forth vindictive wrath! Men heard alarmed;
The uncircumcised infidel believed;
Light-thoughted Mirth grew serious, and wept;
The laugh profane sank in a sigh of deep

Repentance ; the blasphemer, kneeling, prayed,
And prostrate in the dust for mercy called ;
And cursèd old forsaken sinners gnashed
Their teeth, as if their hour had been arrived.
Such was his calling, his commission such.
Yet he was humble, kind, forgiving, meek ;
Easy to be entreated, gracious, mild ;
And, with all patience and affection, taught,
Rebuked, persuaded, solaced, counselled, warned,
In fervent style and manner. Needy, poor,
And dying men, like music, heard his feet
Approach their beds ; and guilty wretches took
New hope, and in his prayers wept and smiled,
And blessed him, as they died forgiven ; and all
Saw in his face contentment, in his life,
The path to glory and perpetual joy.
Deep learned in the philosophy of heaven,
He searched the causes out of good and ill,
Profoundly calculating their effects
Far past the bounds of time ; and balancing,
In the arithmetic of future things,
The loss and profit of the soul to all
Eternity. A skillful workman he
In God's great moral vineyard, what to prune
With cautious hand he knew, what to uproot ;
What were mere weeds, and what celestial plants
Which had unfading vigour in them, knew ;
Nor knew alone, but watched them night and day,
And reared and nourished them, till fit to be
Transplanted to the Paradise above.

Oh ! who can speak his praise ! great, humble man !
He in the current of destruction stood,
And warned the sinner of his woe ; led on

Immanuel's armies in the evil day ;
And, with the everlasting arms embraced
Himself around, stood in the dreadful front
Of battle high, and warred victoriously
With death and hell: and now was come his rest,
His triumph day. Illustrious like a sun,
In that assembly, he, shining from far,
Most excellent in glory, stood assured,
Waiting the promised crown, the promised throne,
The welcome and approval of his Lord.
Nor one alone, but many—prophets, priests,
Apostles, great reformers, all that served
Messiah faithfully, like stars appeared
Of fairest beam ; and round them gathered, clad
In white, the vouchers of their ministry—
The flocks their care had nourished, fed, and saved.

Nor yet in common glory blazing, stood
The true philosopher, decided friend
Of truth and man. Determined foe of all
Deception—calm, collected, patient, wise,
And humble, undeceived by outward shape
Of things, by fashion's revelry uncharmed,
By honour unbewitched—he left the chase
Of vanity, and all the quackeries
Of life, to fools and heroes, or whoe'er
Desired them ; and with reason, much despised,
Traduced, yet heavenly reason, to the shade
Retired—retired, but not to dream, or build
Of ghostly fancies seen in the deep noon
Of sleep, ill-balanced theories ; retired,
But did not leave mankind ; in pity, not
In wrath, retired ; and still, though distant, kept
* His eye on men ; at proper angle took

His stand to see them better, and beyond
The clamour which the bells of folly made,
That most had hung about them, to consult
With nature how their madness might be cured,
And how their true substantial comforts might
Be multiplied. Religious man! what God,
By prophets, priests, evangelists, revealed
Of sacred truth, he thankfully received,
And, by its light directed, went in search
Of more. Before him darkness fled; and all
The goblin tribe, that hung upon the breasts
Of night, and haunted still the moral gloom
With shapeless forms, and blue, infernal lights,
And indistinct and devilish whisperings,
That the miseducated fancies vexed
Of superstitious men—at his approach
Dispersed, invisible. Where'er he went,
This lesson still he taught—To fear no ill
But sin, no being but Almighty God.
All-comprehending sage! too hard alone
For him was man's salvation; all besides
Of use or comfort, that distinction made
Between the desperate savage, scarcely raised
Above the beast whose flesh he ate undressed,
And the most polished of the human race,
Was product of his persevering search.
Religion owed him much, as from the false
She suffered much; for still his main design,
In all his contemplations, was to trace
The wisdom, providence, and love of God,
And to his fellows, less observant, show
Them forth. From prejudice redeemed, with all
His passions still, above the common world,
Sublime in reason, and in aim sublime,

He sat, and on the marvellous works of God
Sedately thought; now glancing up his eye
Intelligent, through all the starry dance;
And penetrating now the deep remote
Of central causes in the womb opaque
Of matter hid; now with inspection nice,
Entering the mystic labyrinths of the mind,
Where thought, of notice ever shy, behind
Thought disappearing, still retired; and still,
Thought meeting thought, and thought awakening
thought,
And mingling still with thought in endless maze—
Bewildered observation; now with eye,
Yet more severely purged, looking far down
Into the heart, where passion wove a web
Of thousand thousand threads, in grain and hue
All different; then, upward venturing whiles,
But reverently, and in his hand the light
Revealed, near the Eternal Throne, he gazed,
Philosophising less than worshipping.
Most truly great! his intellectual strength
And knowledge vast, to men of lesser mind
Seemed infinite; yet, from his high pursuits,
And reasonings most profound, he still returned
Home, with a humbler and a warmer heart;
And none so lowly bowed before his God,
And none so well His awful majesty
And goodness comprehended: or so well
His own dependency and weakness knew.

How glorious now, with vision purified
At the Essential Truth, entirely free
From error, he, investigating still—
For knowledge is not found, unsought, in heaven—

From world to world at pleasure roves, on wing
Of golden ray upborne ; or, at the feet
Of heaven's most ancient sages, sitting, hears
New wonders of the wondrous works of God !

Illustrious, too, that morning, stood the man
Exalted by the people to the throne
Of government, established on the base
Of justice, liberty, and equal right ;
Who, in his countenance sublime, expressed
A nation's majesty, and yet was meek
And humble : and in royal palace gave
Example to the meanest of the fear
Of God, and all integrity of life
And manners ; who, august, yet lowly ; who,
Severe, yet gracious ; in his very heart
Detesting all oppression, all intent
Of private aggrandisement ; and, the first
In every public duty, held the scales
Of justice, and as the law, which reigned in him,
Commanded, gave rewards ; or with the edge
Vindictive, smote, now light, now heavily,
According to the stature of the crime.
Conspicuous like an oak of healthiest bough,
Deep-rooted in his country's love, he stood,
And gave his hand to Virtue, helping up
The honest man to honour and renown ;
And with the look which goodness wears in wrath,
Withering the very blood of Knavery,
And from his presence driving far, ashamed.

Nor less remarkable, among the blest,
Appeared the man who, in the senate-house,
Watchful, unhired, unbribed, and uncorrupt,

And party only to the common weal,
In virtue's awful rage, pleaded for right,
With truth so clear, with argument so strong,
With action so sincere, and tone so loud
And deep, as made the despot quake behind
His adamantine gates, and every joint
In terror smite his fellow-joint relaxed ;
Or, marching to the field, in burnished steel,
While, frowning on his brow, tremendous hung
The wrath of a whole people, long provoked,
Mustered the stormy wings of war, in day
Of dreadful deeds, and led the battle on ;
When Liberty, swift as the fires of heaven,
In fury rode, with all her hosts, and threw
The tyrant down, or drove invasion back.
Illustrious he—illustrious all appeared,
Who ruled supreme in righteousness ; or held
Inferior place, in steadfast rectitude
Of soul. Peculiarly severe had been
The nurture of their youth, their knowledge great,
Great was their wisdom, great their cares, and great
Their self-denial, and their service done
To God and man ; and great was their reward,
At hand, proportioned to their worthy deeds.

Breathe all thy minstrelsy, immortal Harp !
Breathe numbers warm with love, while I rehearse—
Delightful theme, resembling most the songs
Which day and night are sung before the Lamb—
Thy praise, O Charity ! thy labours most
Divine, thy sympathy with sighs, and tears,
And groans ; thy great, thy godlike wish, to heal
All misery, all fortune's wounds, and make
The soul of every living thing rejoice.

Oh, thou wast needed much in days of Time!
No virtue half so much!—none half so fair!
To all the rest, however fine, thou gavest
A finishing and polish, without which
No man e'er entered heaven. Let me record
His praise, the man of great benevolence,
Who pressed thee closely to his glowing heart,
And to thy gentle bidding made his feet
Swift ministers. Of all mankind, his soul
Was most in harmony with heaven: as one
Sole family of brothers, sisters, friends;
One in their origin, one in their rights
To all the common gifts of Providence,
And in their hopes, their joys, and sorrows one,
He viewed the universal human race.
He needed not a law of state, to force
Grudging submission to the law of God;
The law of love was in his heart alive;
What he possessed, he counted not his own;
But, like a faithful steward in a house
Of public alms, what freely he received,
He freely gave, distributing to all
The helpless, the last mite beyond his own
Temperate support, and reckoning still the gift
But justice due to want; and so it was,
Although the world, with compliment not ill
Applied, adorned it with a fairer name.
Nor did he wait till to his door the voice
Of supplication came, but went abroad,
With foot as silent as the starry dews,
In search of misery that pined unseen,
And would not ask. And who can tell what sights
He saw! what groans he heard in that cold world
Below! where Sin, in league with gloomy Death,

Marched daily through the length and breadth of all
The land, wasting at will, and making earth,
Fair earth! a lazar-house, a dungeon dark,
Where Disappointment fed on ruined Hope;
Where Guilt, worn out, leaned on the triple edge
Of want, remorse, despair; where Cruelty
Reached forth a cup of wormwood to the lips
Of Sorrow, that to deeper sorrow wailed;
Where Mockery, and Disease, and Poverty,
Met miserable Age, erewhile sore bent
With his own burden; where the arrowy winds
Of winter pierced the naked, orphan babe,
And chilled the mother's heart who had no home;
And where, alas! in mid-time of his day,
The honest man, robbed by some villain's hand,
Or with long sickness pale, and paler yet
With want and hunger, oft drank bitter draughts
Of his own tears, and had no bread to eat.
Oh! who can tell what sights he saw, what shapes
Of wretchedness! or who describe what smiles
Of gratitude illumed the face of woe,
While from his hand he gave the bounty forth!
As when the Sun, to Cancer wheeling back,
Returned from Capricorn, and showed the north,
That long had lain in cold and cheerless night,
His beamy countenance; all nature then
Rejoiced together glad: the flower looked up
And smiled; the forest, from his locks, shook off
The hoary frost, and clapped his hands; the birds
Awoke, and, singing, rose to meet the day;
And from his hollow den, where many months
He slumbered sad in darkness, blithe and light
Of heart the savage sprang, and saw again
His mountains shine, and with new songs of love

Allured the virgin's ear: so did the house,
The prison-house of guilt, and all the abodes
Of unprovided helplessness, revive,
As on them looked the sunny messenger
Of Charity. By angels tended still,
That marked his deeds, and wrote them in the book
Of God's remembrance; careless he to be
Observed of men, or have each mite bestowed
Recorded punctually, with name and place,
In every bill of news: pleased to do good,
He gave and sought no more, nor questioned much,
Nor reasoned, who deserved; for well he knew
The face of need. Ah me! who could mistake?
The shame to ask, the want that urged within,
Composed a look so perfectly distinct
From all else human, and withal so full
Of misery, that none could pass, untouched,
And be a Christian; or thereafter claim,
In any form, the name or rights of man;
Or, at the Day of Judgment, lift his eye.
While he, in name of Christ, who gave the poor
A cup of water, or a bit of bread,
Impatient for His advent, waiting stood,
Glowing in robes of love and holiness,
Heaven's fairest dress! and round him, ranged in white,
A thousand witnesses appeared, prepared
To tell his gracious deeds before the Throne.

Nor unrenowned among the most renowned,
Nor 'mong the fairest unadmired, that morn,
When highest fame was proof of highest worth,
Distinguished stood the bard; not he, who sold
The incommunicable heavenly gift
To Folly, and with lyre of perfect tone,

Prepared by God himself for holiest praise,—
Vilest of traitors! most dishonest man!—
Sat by the door of Ruin, and made there
A melody so sweet, and in the mouth
Of drunkenness and debauch, that else had croaked
In natural discordance, jarring harsh,
Put so divine a song that many turned
Aside, and entered in undone, and thought,
Meanwhile, it was the gate of heaven, so like
An angel's voice the music seemed; nor he,
Who whining grievously of damsel coy,
Or blaming fortune, that would nothing give
For doing nought, in indolent lament
Unprofitable, passed his piteous days,
Making himself the hero of his tale,
Deserving ill the poet's name; but he,
The bard, by God's own hand anointed, who
To Virtue's all-delighting harmony
His numbers tuned; who, from the fount of truth,
Poured melody, and beauty poured, and love,
In holy stream, into the human heart:
And from the height of lofty argument,
Who "justified the ways of God to man,"
And sang what still he sings, approved, in heaven;
Though now with bolder note, above the damp
Terrestrial, which the pure celestial fire
Cooled, and restrained in part his flaming wing.

Philosophy was deemed of deeper thought,
And judgment more severe than Poetry;
To fable, she, and fancy, more inclined.
And yet, if Fancy, as was understood,
Was of creative nature, or of power,
With self-wrought stuff to build a fabric up,

To mortal vision wonderful and strange,
Philosophy, the theoretic, claimed
Undoubtedly the first and highest place
In Fancy's favour. Her material souls,
Her chance, her atoms shaped alike, her white
Proved black, her universal nothing, all;
And all her wondrous systems—how the mind
With matter met; how man was free, and yet
All pre-ordained; how evil first began;
And chief, her speculations, soaring high,
Of the eternal, uncreated Mind,
Which left all reason infinitely far
Behind—surprising feat of theory!—
Were pure creation of her own; webs wove
Of gossamer in Fancy's lightest loom,
And nowhere on the list of being made
By God recorded: but her look, meanwhile,
Was grave and studious; and many thought
She reasoned deeply, when she wildly raved.

The true, legitimate, anointed bard,
Whose song through ages poured its melody,
Was most severely thoughtful, most minute
And accurate of observation, most
Familiarly acquainted with all modes
And phases of existence. True, no doubt,
He had originally drunk, from out
The fount of life and love, a double draught,
That gave whate'er he touched a double life:
But this was mere desire at first, and power
Devoid of means to work by; need was still
Of persevering, quick, inspective mood
Of mind; of faithful memory, vastly stored
From universal being's ample field

With knowledge ; and a judgment sound and clear,
Well disciplined in nature's rules of taste,
Discerning to select, arrange, combine,
From infinite variety, and still
To nature true ; and guide withal—hard task !—
The sacred living impetus divine,
Discreetly through the harmony of song.
Completed thus, the poet sang ; and age
To age, enraptured, heard his measures flow ;
Enraptured, for he poured the very fat
And marrow of existence through his verse,
And gave the soul, that else in selfish cold,
Unwarmed by kindred interest, had lain—
A roomy life, a glowing relish high,
A sweet, expansive brotherhood of being,—
Joy answering joy, and sigh responding sigh,
Through all the fibres of the social heart.
Observant, sympathetic, sound of head,
Upon the ocean vast of human thought,
With passion rough and stormy, venturing out,
Even as the living billows rolled, he threw
His numbers over them, seized as they were,
And to perpetual ages left them fixed,
To each, a mirror of itself displayed ;
Despair for ever lowering dark on Sin,
And Happiness on Virtue smiling fair.

He was the minister of fame, and gave
To whom he would, renown ; nor missed himself—
Although despising much the idiot roar
Of popular applause, that sudden, oft,
Unnaturally turning, whom it nursed
Itself devoured—the lasting fame, the praise
Of God and holy men, to excellence given.

Yet less he sought his own renown, than wished
To have the eternal images of truth
And beauty, pictured in his verse, admired.
'Twas these, taking immortal shape and form
Beneath his eye, that charmed his midnight watch ;
And oft his soul with awful transports shook
Of happiness, unfelt by other men.
This was that spell, that sorcery which bound
The poet to the lyre, and would not let
Him go ; that hidden mystery of joy,
Which made him sing in spite of fortune's worst,
And was, at once, both motive and reward.

Nor now among the choral harps, in this
The native clime of song, are those unknown,
With higher note ascending, who below,
In holy ardour, aimed at lofty strains.
True fame is never lost : many, whose names
Were honoured much on earth, are famous here
For poetry, and with archangel harps,
Hold no unequal rivalry in song ;
Leading the choirs of heaven, in numbers high,
In numbers ever sweet and ever new.

Behold them yonder, where the river pure
Flows warbling down before the throne of God,
And, shading on each side, the tree of life
Spreads its unfading boughs !—see how they shine,
In garments white, quaffing deep draughts of love,
And harping on their harps, new harmonies
Preparing for the ear of God, Most High !

But why should I of individual worth,
Of individual glory, longer sing ?

No true believer was that day obscure ;
No holy soul but had enough of joy ;
No pious wish without its full reward.
Who in the Father and the Son believed,
With faith that wrought by love to holy deeds,
And purified the heart, none trembled there,
Nor had by earthly guise his rank concealed ;
Whether, unknown, he tilled the ground remote,
Observant of the seasons, and adored
God in the promise, yearly verified,
Of seed-time, harvest, summer, winter, day
And night, returning duly at the time
Appointed ; or, on the shadowy mountain-side,
Worshipped at dewy eve, watching his flocks ;
Or, trading, saw the wonders of the deep,
And as the needle to the starry pole
Turned constantly, so he his heart to God ;
Or else, in servitude severe, was taught
To break the bonds of sin ; or, begging, learned
To trust the Providence that fed the raven,
And clothed the lily with her annual gown.

Most numerous, indeed, among the saved,
And many, too, not least illustrious, shone
The men who had no name on earth. Eclipsed
By lowly circumstance, they lived unknown ;
Like stream that in the desert warbles clear,
Still nursing as it goes the herb and flower,
Though never seen ; or like the star, retired
In solitudes of ether, far beyond
All sight, not of essential splendour less,
Though shining unobserved. None saw their pure
Devotion, none their tears, their faith, and love,
Which burned within them, both to God and man—



*“ Or, on the shadowy mountain-side,
Worshipped at dewy eve, watching his flocks.”*

None saw but God: He, in His bottle, all
Their tears preserved, and every holy wish
Wrote in His book; and, not as they had done,
But as they wished, with all their heart, to do,
Arrayed them now in glory, and displayed—
No longer hid by coarse uncourtly garb—
In lustre equal to their inward worth.

Man's time was past, and his eternity
Began: no fear remained of change. The youth,
Who, in the glowing morn of vigorous life,
High reaching after great religious deeds,
Was suddenly cut off, with all his hopes,
In sunny bloom, and unaccomplished left
His withered aims—saw everlasting days
Before him dawning rise, in which to achieve
All glorious things, and get himself the name
That jealous Death too soon forbade on earth.

Old things had passed away, and all was new;
And yet, of all the new-begun, nought so
Prodigious difference made, in the affairs
And thoughts of every man, as certainty.
For doubt, all doubt was gone of every kind;
Doubt that, erewhile, beneath the lowest base
Of mortal reasonings, deepest laid, crept in,
And made the strongest, best-cemented towers
Of human workmanship, so weakly shake,
And to their lofty tops so waver still,
That those who built them feared their sudden fall.
But doubt, all doubt was past; and in its place,
To every thought that in the heart of man
Was present, now had come an absolute,
Unquestionable certainty, which gave

To each decision of the mind immense
Importance, raising to its proper height
The sequent tide of passion, whether joy
Or grief. The good man knew, in very truth,
That he was saved to all eternity,
And feared no more: the bad had proof complete
That he was damned for ever; and believed
Entirely, that on every wicked soul
Anguish should come, and wrath, and utter woe.

Knowledge was much increased, but wisdom more.
The film of Time, that still before the sight
Of mortal vision danced, and led the best
Astray, pursuing unsubstantial dreams,
Had dropped from every eye. Men saw that they
Had vexed themselves in vain, to understand
What now no hope to understand remained;
That they had often counted evil good,
And good for ill: laughed when they should have
wept;
And wept, forlorn, when God intended mirth.
But what, of all their follies past, surprised
Them most, and seemed most totally insane
And unaccountable, was value set
On objects of a day, was serious grief
Or joy for loss or gain of mortal things.
So utterly impossible it seemed,
When men their proper interests saw, that aught
Of terminable kind, that aught, which e'er
Could die, or cease to be, however named,
Should make a human soul—a legal heir
Of everlasting years—rejoice or weep,
In earnest mood; for nothing now seemed worth
A thought, but had eternal bearing in't.

Much truth had been assented to in time,
Which never, till this day, had made a due
Impression on the heart: take one example.
Early from heaven it was revealed, and oft
Repeated in the world, from pulpits preached,
And penned and read in holy books, that God
Respected not the persons of mankind.
Had this been truly credited and felt,
The king, in purple robe, had owned, indeed,
The beggar for his brother; pride of rank
And office, thawed into paternal love;
Oppression feared the day of equal rights,
Predicted; covetous extortion kept
In mind the hour of reckoning soon to come;
And bribed injustice thought of being judged,
When he should stand, on equal foot, beside
The man he wronged; and surely—nay, 'tis true,
Most true, beyond all whispering of doubt,
That he who lifted up the reeking scourge,
Dripping with gore from the slave's back, before
He struck again had paused, and seriously
Of that tribunal thought, where God himself
Should look him in the face, and ask in wrath,
“Why didst thou this? Man! was he not thy brother,
Bone of thy bone, and flesh and blood of thine?”
But, ah! this truth, by Heaven and reason taught,
Was never fully credited on earth.
The titled, flattered, lofty men of power,
Whose wealth bought verdicts of applause for deeds
Of wickedness, could ne'er believe the time
Should truly come, when judgment should proceed
Impartially against them, and they, too,
Have no good speaker at the Judge's ear,
No witnesses to bring them off for gold,

No power to turn the sentence from its course ;
And they of low estate, who saw themselves,
Day after day, despised, and wronged, and mocked,
Without redress, could scarcely think the day
Should e'er arrive, when they, in truth, should stand
On perfect level with the potentates
And princes of the earth, and have their cause
Examined fairly, and their rights allowed.
But now this truth was felt, believed and felt,
That men were really of a common stock,
That no man ever had been more than man.

Much prophecy—revealed by holy bards,
Who sang the will of Heaven by Judah's streams—
Much prophecy, that waited long the scoff
Of lips uncircumcised, was then fulfilled ;
To the last tittle scrupulously fulfilled.
It was foretold by those of ancient days,
A time should come, when wickedness should weep,
Abased ; when every lofty look of man
Should be bowed down, and all his haughtiness
Made low ; when righteousness alone should lift
The head in glory, and rejoice at heart ;
When many, first in splendour and renown,
Should be most vile ; and many, lowest once,
And last in Poverty's obscurest nook,
Highest and first in honour should be seen,
Exalted ; and when some, when all the good,
Should rise to glory and eternal life ;
And all the bad, lamenting, wake, condemned
To shame, contempt, and everlasting grief.

These prophecies had tarried long, so long
That many wagged the head, and, taunting, asked,

“When shall they come?” But asked no more, nor
mocked :

For the reproach of prophecy was wiped
Away, and every word of God found true.

And, oh ! what change of state, what change of rank,
In that assembly everywhere was seen !
The humble-hearted laughed, the lofty mourned,
And every man, according to his works
Wrought in the body, there took character.

Thus stood they mixed, all generations stood
Of all mankind ! innumerable throng !
Great harvest of the grave !—waiting the will
Of Heaven, attentively and silent all,
As forest, spreading out beneath the calm
Of evening skies, when even the single leaf
Is heard distinctly rustle down and fall ;
So silent they, when from above the sound
Of rapid wheels approached, and suddenly
In heaven appeared a host of angels strong,
With chariots and with steeds of burning fire ;
Cherub, and Seraph, Thrones, Dominions, Powers,
Bright in celestial armour, dazzling, rode.
And, leading in the front, illustrious shone
Michael and Gabriel, servants long approved
In high commission,—girt that day with power,
Which nought created, man or devil, might
Resist. Nor waited, gazing, long ; but, quick
Descending, silently and without song,
As servants bent to do their master’s work,
To middle air they raised the human race,
Above the path long travelled by the sun ;
And as a shepherd from the sheep divides

The goats ; or husbandman, with reaping bands
In harvest, separates the precious wheat,
Selected from the tares ; so did they part
Mankind, the good and bad, to right and left,
To meet no more ; these ne'er again to smile,
Nor those to weep ; these never more to share
Society of mercy with the saints ;
Nor, henceforth, those to suffer with the vile.
Strange parting ! not for hours, nor days, nor months,
Nor for ten thousand times ten thousand years ;
But for a whole eternity !—though fit,
And pleasant to the righteous, yet to all
Strange, and most strangely felt ! The sire, to right
Retiring, saw the son, sprung from his loins—
Beloved how dearly once ! but who forgot
Too soon, in sin's intoxicating cup,
The father's warnings and the mother's tears—
Fall to the left among the reprobate ;
And sons redeemed beheld the fathers, whom
They loved and honoured once, gathered among
The wicked. Brothers, sisters, kinsmen, friends ;
Husband and wife, who ate at the same board,
And under the same roof, united, dwelt
From youth to hoary age, bearing the chance
And change of time together, parted then
For evermore. But none whose friendship grew
From virtue's pure and everlasting root
Took different roads : these, knit in stricter bonds
Of amity, embracing, saw no more
Death, with his scythe, stand by ; nor heard the word,
The bitter word, which closed all earthly friendships,
And finished every feast of love—Farewell.
To all, strange parting ! to the wicked, sad
And terrible ! new horror seized them, while

They saw the saints withdrawing, and with them
All hope of safety, all delay of wrath.

Beneath a crown of rosy light,—like that
Which once in Goshen on the flocks, and herds,
And dwellings, smiled, of Jacob, while the land
Of Nile was dark ; or like the pillar bright
Of sacred fire, that stood above the sons
Of Israel, when they camped at midnight by
The foot of Horeb, or the desert side
Of Sinai,—now the righteous took their place ;
All took their place, who ever wished to go
To heaven for heaven's own sake. Not one remained
Among the accursed, that e'er desired with all
The heart to be redeemed ; that ever sought
Submissively to do the will of God,
Howe'er it crossed his own ; or to escape
Hell, for aught other than its penal fires.
All took their place, rejoicing, and beheld,
In centre of the crown of golden beams
That canopied them o'er, these gracious words,
Blushing with tints of love: "Fear not, my saints."

To other sight of horrible dismay,
Jehovah's ministers the wicked drove,
And left them bound immovable in chains
Of justice. O'er their heads a bowless cloud
Of indignation hung ; a cloud it was
Of thick and utter darkness, rolling, like
An ocean, tides of livid, pitchy flame,
With thunders charged and lightnings ruinous,
And red with forkèd vengeance, such as wounds
The soul ; and full of angry shapes of wrath,
And eddies whirling with tumultuous fire,

And forms of terror raving to and fro,
And monsters, unimagined heretofore
By guilty men in dreams before their death,
From horrid to more horrid changing still,
In hideous movement through that stormy gulf;
And evermore the thunders murmuring spoke
From out the darkness, uttering loud these words,
Which every guilty conscience echoed back:
“Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not!”
Dread words! that barred excuse, and threw the weight
Of every man’s perdition on himself
Directly home. Dread words! heard then, and heard
For ever through the wastes of Erebus.
“Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not!”
These were the words which glowed upon the sword,
Whose wrath burned fearfully behind the cursed,
As they were driven away from God to Tophet.
“Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not!”
These are the words to which the harps of grief
Are strung; and, to the chorus of the damned,
The rocks of hell repeat them evermore;
Loud echoed through the caverns of despair,
And poured in thunder on the ear of Woe.

Nor ruined men alone, beneath that cloud,
Trembled. There Satan and his legions stood—
Satan, the first and eldest sinner—bound
For judgment. He, by other name, held once
Conspicuous rank in heaven, among the sons
Of happiness, rejoicing day and night;
But pride, that was ashamed to bow to God
Most high, his bosom filled with hate, his face
Made black with envy, and in his soul begot
Thoughts guilty of rebellion ’gainst the throne

Of the Eternal Father and the Son,
From everlasting built on righteousness.

Ask not how pride, in one created pure,
Could grow; or sin without example spring,
Where holiness alone was sown: esteem't
Enough, that he, as every being made
By God, was made entirely holy, had
The will of God before him set for law
And regulation of his life, and power
To do as bid; but was, meantime, left free,
To prove his worth, his gratitude, his love.
How proved besides? for how could service done,
That might not else have been withheld, evince
The will to serve, which, rather than the deed,
God doth require, and virtue counts alone?
To stand or fall, to do or leave undone,
Is reason's lofty privilege, denied
To all below, by instinct bound to fate,
Unmeriting alike reward or blame.

Thus free, the devil chose to disobey
The will of God, and was thrown out from heaven,
And with him all his bad example stained:
Yet not to utter punishment decreed,
But left to fill the measure of his sin,
In tempting and seducing man—too soon,
Too easily seduced! And, from the day
He first set foot on earth—of rancour full,
And pride, and hate, and malice, and revenge—
He set himself, with most felonious aim
And hellish perseverance, to root out
All good, and in its place to plant all ill:
To rub and raze, from all created things,

The fair and holy portraiture divine,
And on them to enstamp his features grim ;
To draw all creatures off from loyalty
To their Creator, and to make them bow
The knee to him : nor failed of great success,
As populous hell this day can testify.
He held, indeed, large empire in the world,
Contending proudly with the King of heaven.
To him temples were built, and sacrifice
Of costly blood upon his altars flowed ;
And—what best pleased him, for in show he seemed
Then likest God—whole nations, bowing, fell
Before him worshipping ; and from his lips
Entreated oracles, which he by priests—
For many were his priests in every age—
Answered, though guessing but at future things,
And erring oft, yet still believed ; so well
His ignorance in ambiguous phrase he veiled.

Nor needs it wonder that with man, once fallen,
His tempting should succeed. Large was his mind
And understanding—though impaired by sin,
Still large—and constant practice, day and night,
In cunning, guile, and all hypocrisy,
From age to age, gave him experience vast
In sin's dark tactics, such as boyish man,
Unarmed by strength divine, could ill withstand.
And well he knew his weaker side, and still
His lures, with baits that pleased the senses, busked—
To his impatient passions offering terms
Of present joy, and bribing reason's eye
With earthly wealth, and honours near at hand :
Nor failed to misadvise his future hope
And faith, by false unkerneled promises

Of heavens of sensual gluttony and love,
That suited best their grosser appetites.
Into the sinner's heart, who lived secure,
And feared him least, he entered at his will.
But chief he chose his residence in courts
And conclaves, stirring princes up to acts
Of blood and tyranny; and moving priests
To barter truth, and swap the souls of men
For lusty benefices, and address
Of lofty sounding. Nor the saints elect,
Who walked with God, in virtue's path sublime,
Did he not sometimes venture to molest;
In dreams and moments of unguarded thought,
Suggesting guilty doubts and fears, that God
Would disappoint their hope; and in their way
Bestrewing pleasures, tongued so sweet, and so
In holy garb arrayed, that many stooped,
Believing them of heavenly sort, and fell,
And to their high professions brought disgrace
And scandal; to themselves, thereafter, long
And bitter nights of sore repentance, vexed
With shame, unwonted sorrow, and remorse.
And more they should have fallen, and more have
 wept,
Had not their guardian angels, who, by God
Commissioned, stood beside them in the hour
Of danger, whether craft, or fierce attack,—
To Satan's deepest skill opposing skill
More deep, and to his strongest arm, an arm
More strong—upborne them in their hands, and filled
Their souls with all discernment, quick to pierce
His stratagems and fairest shows of sin.

Now like a roaring lion, up and down

The world, destroying, though unseen, he raged ;
And now, retiring back to Tartarus,—
Far back, beneath the thick of guiltiest dark,
Where night ne'er heard of day—in council grim
He sat, with ministers whose thoughts were damned,
And there such plans devised, as, had not God
Checked and restrained, had added earth entire
To hell, and uninhabited left heaven,
Jehovah unadored. Nor unsevere,
Even then, his punishment deserved : the Worm
That never dies, coiled in his bosom, gnawed
Perpetually ; sin after sin brought pang
Succeeding pang ; and now and then the bolts
Of Zion's King, vindictive, smote his soul
With fiery woe, to blast his proud designs,
And gave him earnest of the wrath to come.
And chief, when on the cross Messiah said,
“ 'Tis finished,” did the edge of vengeance smite
Him through, and all his gloomy legions touch
With new despair. But yet, to be the first
In mischief, to have armies at his call,
To hold dispute with God, in days of time,
His pride and malice fed, and bore him up
Above the worst of ruin. Still, to plan
And act great deeds, though wicked, brought at least
The recompense which nature hath attached
To all activity, and aim pursued
With perseverance, good or bad : for as,
By nature's laws, immutable and just,
Enjoyment stops where indolence begins ;
And purposeless, to-morrow-borrowing sloth,
Itself heaps on its shoulders loads of woe,
Too heavy to be borne ; so industry—
To meditate, to plan, resolve, perform,—

Which in itself is good, as surely brings
Reward of good, no matter what be done :
And such reward the devil had, as long
As the decrees eternal gave him space
To work. But now, all action ceased ; his hope
Of doing evil perished quite ; his pride,
His courage, failed him ; and beneath that cloud,
Which hung its central terrors o'er his head,
With all his angels, he for sentence stood,
And rolled his eyes around, that uttered guilt
And woe, in horrible perfection joined.
As he had been the chief and leader, long,
Of the apostate crew that warred with God
And holiness ; so now, among the bad,
Lowest, and most forlorn, and trembling most,
With all iniquity deformed and foul,
With all perdition ruinous and dark,
He stood—example awful of the wrath
Of God ! sad mark, to which all sin must fall !—
And made, on every side, so black a hell,
That spirits, used to night and misery,
To distance drew, and looked another way ;
And from their golden cloud, far off, the saints
Saw round him darkness grow more dark, and
 heard
The impatient thunderbolts, with deadliest crash
And frequentest, break o'er his head—the sign
That Satan there, the vilest sinner, stood.

Ah me ! what eyes were there beneath that cloud !
Eyes of despair, final and certain ! eyes
That looked, and looked, and saw, where'er they
 looked,
Interminable darkness, utter woe.

'Twas pitiful to see the early flower
Nipped by the unfeeling frost, just when it rose,
Lovely in youth, and put its beauties on.
'Twas pitiful to see the hopes of all
The year, the yellow harvest, made a heap,
By rains of judgment; or by torrents swept,
With flocks and cattle, down the raging flood;
Or scattered by the winnowing winds, that bore
Upon their angry wings the wrath of heaven.
Sad was the field where yesterday was heard
The roar of war; and sad the sight of maid,
Of mother, widow, sister, daughter, wife,
Stooping and weeping over senseless, cold,
Defaced, and mangled lumps of breathless earth,
Which had been husbands, fathers, brothers, sons,
And lovers, when that morning's sun arose.
'Twas sad to see the wonted seat of friend
Removed by death; and sad to visit scenes,
When old, where, in the smiling morn of life,
Lived many who both knew and loved us much,
And they all gone, dead, or dispersed abroad,
And stranger faces seen among their hills.
'Twas sad to see the little orphan babe
Weeping and sobbing on its mother's grave.
'Twas pitiful to see an old, forlorn,
Decrepit, withered wretch, unhoused, unclad,
Starving to death with poverty and cold.
'Twas pitiful to see a blooming bride,
That promise gave of many a happy year,
Touched by decay, turn pale, and waste, and die.
'Twas pitiful to hear the murderous thrust
Of ruffian's blade, that sought the life entire.
'Twas sad to hear the blood come gurgling forth
From out the throat of the wild suicide.



*“For that day had seen
The old man lay, within the narrow house,
The last of all his family.”*

Sad was the sight of widowed, childless age
Weeping:—I saw it once. Wrinkled with time,
And hoary with the dust of years, an old
And worthy man came to his humble roof,
Tottering and slow, and on the threshold stood.
No foot, no voice, was heard within. None came
To meet him, where he oft had met a wife,
And sons, and daughters, glad at his return:
None came to meet him; for that day had seen
The old man lay, within the narrow house,
The last of all his family; and now
He stood in solitude—in solitude
Wide as the world; for all that made to him
Society, had fled beyond its bounds.
Wherever strayed his aimless eye, there lay
The wreck of some fond hope, that touched his soul
With bitter thoughts, and told him all was past.
His lonely cot was silent, and he looked
As if he could not enter. On his staff,
Bending, he leaned, and from his weary eye,
Distressing sight! a single tear-drop wept:
None followed, for the fount of tears was dry.
Alone and last, it fell from wrinkle down
To wrinkle, till it lost itself, drunk by
The withered cheek, on which again no smile
Should come, or drop of tenderness be seen.
This sight was very pitiful; but one
Was sadder still, the saddest seen in time:
A man, to-day, the glory of his kind,
In reason clear, in understanding large,
In judgment sound, in fancy quick, in hope
Abundant, and in promise like a field
Well cultured, and refreshed with dews from God:
To-morrow, chained, and raving mad, and whipped

By servile hands ; sitting on dismal straw,
And gnashing with his teeth against the chain,
The iron chain that bound him hand and foot ;
And trying whiles to send his glaring eye
Beyond the wide circumference of his woe ;
Or, humbling more, more miserable still,
Giving an idiot laugh that served to show
The blasted scenery of his horrid face ;
Calling the straw his sceptre, and the stone,
On which he pinioned sat, his royal throne.
Poor, poor, poor man ! fallen far below the brute !
His reason strove in vain to find her way,
Lost in the stormy desert of his brain ;
And, being active still, she wrought all strange,
Fantastic, execrable, monstrous things.

All these were sad, and thousands more, that sleep
Forgot beneath the funeral pall of Time ;
And bards, as well became, bewailed them much,
With doleful instruments of weeping song.
But what were these ? what might be worst had in't,
However small, some grains of happiness ;
And man ne'er drank a cup of earthly sort
That might not held another drop of gall ;
Or, in his deepest sorrow, laid his head
Upon a pillow set so close with thorns
That might not held another prickle still.
Accordingly, the saddest human look
Had hope in't—faint, indeed, but still 'twas hope.
But why excuse the misery of earth ?
Say it was dismal, cold, and dark, and deep,
Beyond the utterance of strongest words : ~
But say that none remembered it, who saw
The eye of beings damned for evermore,

Rolling, and rolling—rolling still in vain!
To find some ray, to see beyond the gulf
Of an unavenued, fierce, fiery, hot,
Interminable, dark Futurity!
And rolling still, and rolling still in vain!

Thus stood the reprobate beneath the shade
Of terror, and beneath the crown of love
The good: and there was silence in the vault
Of heaven; and as they stood and listened, they heard,
Afar to left, among the utter dark,
Hell rolling o'er his waves of burning fire,
And thundering through his caverns, empty then,
As if he preparation made, to act
The final vengeance of the fiery Lamb.
And there was heard, coming from out the Pit,
The hollow wailing of Eternal Death,
And horrid cry of the undying Worm.

The wicked paler turned, and scarce the good
Their colour kept; but were not long dismayed.
That moment, in the heavens, how wondrous fair!
The Angel of Mercy stood, and on the bad
Turning his back, over the ransomed threw
His bow, bedropped with imagery of love,
And promises on which their faith reclined.
Throughout, deep, breathless silence reigned again;
And on the circuit of the upper spheres
A glorious seraph stood, and cried aloud,
That every ear of man and devil heard,
“Him that is filthy, let be filthy still;
Him that is holy, let be holy still.”
And suddenly another squadron bright,
Of high archangel glory, stooping, brought

A marvellous bow: one base upon the Cross,
The other on the shoulder of the Bear,
They placed, from south to north spanning the heavens,
And on each hand dividing good and bad;
Who read, on either side, these burning words,
Which ran along the arch in living fire,
And wanted not to be believed in full:
“As ye have sown, so shall ye reap this day!”

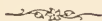
THE COURSE OF TIME

BOOK X.

ARGUMENT.

Prayer and thanksgiving of the Author.—Solemn dedication of his labours.—Supplication for the Divine Influence.—The Bard resumes.—The Judgment-day—what it really was.—The redeemed and the reprobate still standing as described in Book IX.—Universal calm of Earth waiting her doom.—The trumpet sounded by Michael.—Gathering of the heavenly hosts, and arrival around the New Jerusalem of the inhabitants of other regions of space.—Description of these multitudes of immortals.—All wait silent and adoring. — Address of the Almighty from the cloud.—The destiny of man pronounced concluded.—The ways of Heaven unfolded and vindicated.—Address of the Father to the Eternal Son.—The Son of God comes to Judgment.—How the righteous behold His coming.—The Judge on the Great White Throne.—The heavenly hosts ranged around.—The Book opened.—Men read their names rejoicing or despairing.—Sentence pronounced.—The profound stillness of universal life and space.—The wrath of God.—The seven last Thunders.—The reprobate driven beyond the Gulf.—Second Death and the undying Worm.—The wall of fire closed round the wicked.—Eternity of punishments.—The destruction of the globe.—Imagery of the final conflagration pointed out.—The Judge approves the righteous.—Hymn to God and the Lamb.—The Eternal Union of the Church with Christ.—The finished work of the Messiah.—Conclusion.

THE COURSE OF TIME.



BOOK X.

GOD of my fathers! holy, just, and good!
My God! my Father! my unfailing hope!
Jehovah! let the incense of my praise,
Accepted, burn before thy mercy-seat,
And in thy presence burn, both day and night.
Maker! Preserver! my Redeemer, God!
Whom have I in the heavens but Thee alone?
On earth, but Thee, whom should I praise, whom love?
For Thou hast brought me hitherto, upheld
By thy omnipotence; and from thy grace—
Unbought, unmerited, though not unsought—
The wells of thy salvation, hast refreshed
My spirit, watering it, at morn and even;
And by thy Spirit, which Thou freely giv'st
To whom Thou wilt, hast led my venturous song
Over the vale and mountain-track, the light
And shade of man; into the burning deep
Descending now, and now circling the mount
Where highest sits Divinity enthroned;

Rolling along the tide of fluent thought,
The tide of moral, natural, divine ;
Gazing on past and present ; and again,
On rapid pinion borne, outstripping Time,
In long excursion, wandering through the groves
Unfading, and the endless avenues
That shade the landscape of Eternity ;
And talking there with holy angels met,
And future men, in glorious vision seen !
Nor unrewarded have I watched at night,
And heard the drowsy sound of neighbouring sleep.
New thought, new imagery, new scenes of bliss
And glory, unrehearsed by mortal tongue,
Which, unrevealed, I trembling turned and left,
Bursting at once upon my ravished eye,
With joy unspeakable have filled my soul,
And made my cup run over with delight ;
Though in my face the blasts of adverse winds,
While boldly circumnavigating Man
(Winds seeming adverse, though perhaps not so),
Have beat severely—disregarded beat,
When I behind me heard the voice of God,
And His propitious Spirit, say, Fear not !

God of my fathers ! ever-present God !
This offering more inspire, sustain, accept ;
Highest, if numbers answer to the theme ;
Best answering, if thy Spirit dictate most.
Jehovah ! breathe upon my soul ; my heart
Enlarge ; my faith increase ; increase my hope ;
My thoughts exalt ; my fancy sanctify,
And all my passions, that I near thy throne
May venture, unreprieved ; and sing the day,
Which none unholy ought to name—the Day

Of Judgment! greatest day past or to come!
Day which—deny me what thou wilt, deny
Me home, or friend, or honourable name—
Thy mercy grant, I thoroughly prepared,
With comely garment of redeeming love,
May meet, and have my Judge for Advocate.

Come, gracious Influence, Breath of the Lord!
And touch me trembling, as thou touched the man
Greatly beloved, when he in vision saw
By Ulai's stream, the Ancient sit; and talked
With Gabriel, to his prayer swiftly sent,
At evening sacrifice. Hold my right hand,
Almighty! hear me, for I ask through Him,
Whom Thou hast heard, whom Thou wilt always hear,
Thy Son, our interceding great High Priest!
Reveal the future; let the years to come
Pass by; and open my ear to hear the harp,—
The prophet harp whose wisdom I repeat,
Interpreting the voice of distant song—
Which thus again resumes the lofty verse;
Loftiest, if I interpret faithfully
The holy numbers which my spirit hears.

Thus came the day, the Harp again began,
The day that many thought should never come,
That all the wicked wished should never come,
That all the righteous had expected long;
Day greatly feared, and yet too little feared
By him who feared it most; day laughed at much
By the profane, the trembling day of all
Who laughed; day when all shadows passed, all
dreams;
When substance, when reality commenced;

Last day of lying, final day of all
Deceit, all knavery, all quackish phrase;
Ender of all disputing, of all mirth
Ungodly, of all loud and boasting speech;
Judge of all judgments, Judge of every judge,
Adjuster of all causes, rights, and wrongs;
Day oft appealed to, and appealed to oft
By those who saw its dawn with saddest heart:
Day most magnificent in Fancy's range,
Whence she returned, confounded, trembling, pale,
With overmuch of glory faint and blind;
Day, most important held, prepared for most,
By every rational, wise, and holy man:
Day of eternal gain for worldly loss;
Day of eternal loss for worldly gain;
Great day of terror, vengeance, woe, despair;
Revealer of all secrets, thoughts, desires;
Rein-trying, heart-investigating day,
That stood between Eternity and Time,
Reviewed all past, determined all to come,
And bound all destinies for evermore!
Believing day of unbelief! Great day!
That set in proper light the affairs of earth,
And justified the government Divine!
Great day! what can we more? what should we more?
Great triumph-day of God's Incarnate Son!
Great day of glory to the Almighty God!
Day whence the everlasting years begin
Their date, new era in eternity,
And oft referred to in the song of heaven!

Thus stood the apostate, thus the ransomed stood;
Those held by justice fast, and these by love,
Reading the fiery scutcheonry, that blazed

On high, upon the great celestial bow:
“As ye have sown, so shall ye reap this day!”
All read, all understood, and all believed,
Convinced of judgment, righteousness, and sin.

Meantime the universe throughout was still.
The cope, above and round about, was calm;
And motionless, beneath them, lay the Earth,
Silent and sad, as one that sentence waits
For flagrant crime; when suddenly was heard,
Behind the azure vaulting of the sky,
Above, and far remote from reach of sight,
The sound of trumpets, and the sound of crowds,
And prancing steeds, and rapid chariot-wheels,
That from four quarters rolled, and seemed in haste
Assembling at some place of rendezvous;
And so they seemed to roll, with furious speed,
As if none meant to be behind the first.
Nor seemed alone: that day the golden trump,
Whose voice, from centre to circumference
Of all created things, is heard distinct,
God had bid Michael sound, to summon all
The hosts of bliss to presence of their King;
And, all the morning, millions infinite,
That millions governed each, Dominions, Powers,
Thrones, Principalities, with all their hosts,
Had been arriving near the capital,
And royal city, New Jerusalem,
From heaven's remotest bounds. Nor yet from heaven
Alone, came they that day. The worlds around,
Or neighbouring nearest on the verge of night,
Emptied, sent forth their whole inhabitants.
All tribes of being came, of every name,
From every coast, filling Jehovah's courts.

From morn till mid-day in the squadrons poured
Immense, along the bright celestial roads.
Swiftly they rode, for love unspeakable
To God, and to Messiah, Prince of Peace,
Drew them, and made obedience haste to be
Approved. And now before the eternal Throne—
Brighter, that day, than when the Son prepared
To overthrow the seraphim rebelled—
And circling round the mount of Deity
Upon the sea of glass, all round about,
And down the borders of the stream of life,
And over all the plains of Paradise,
For many a league of heavenly measurement—
Assembled stood the immortal multitudes,
Millions above all number infinite,
The nations of the blessed. Distinguished each,
By chief of goodly stature blazing far,
By various garb, and flag of various hue
Streaming through heaven from standard lifted
high—

The arms and imagery of thousand worlds.
Distinguished each, but all arrayed complete
In armour bright of helmet, shield, and sword,
And mounted all in chariots of fire:
A military throng, blent, not confused—
As soldiers on some day of great review,
Burning in splendour of refulgent gold,
And ornament, on purpose long devised
For this expected day. Distinguished each,
But all accoutred as became their Lord,
And high occasion; all in holiness,
The livery of the soldiery of God,
Vested; and shining all with perfect bliss,
The wages that His faithful servants win.

Thus stood they numberless around the mount
Of presence ; and adoring, waited, hushed
In deepest silence, for the voice of God.
That moment, all the sacred hill on high
Burned, terrible with glory, and behind
The uncreated lustre hid the Lamb,
Invisible : when, from the radiant clond,
This voice, addressing all the hosts of heaven,
Proceeded—not in words as we converse,
Each with his fellow, but in language such
As God doth use, imparting without phrase
Successive what, in speech of creatures, seems
Long narrative, though long, yet losing much,
In feeble symbols, of the thought Divine.

My servants long approved, my faithful sons,
Angels of glory, Thrones, Dominions, Powers !
Well pleased, this morning, I have seen the speed
Of your obedience, gathering round my throne,
In order due, and well-becoming garb ;
Illustrious, as I see, beyond your wont,
As was my wish, to glorify this day ;
And now, what your assembling means, attend.

This day concludes the destiny of man :
The hour, appointed from eternity,
To judge the Earth in righteousness, is come :
To end the war of Sin, that long has fought,
Permitted, against the sword of Holiness ;
To give to men and devils, as their works
Recorded in my all-remembering book
I find : good to the good, and great reward
Of everlasting honour, joy, and peace,
Before my presence here for evermore ;

And to the evil, as their sins provoke,
Eternal recompense of shame and woe,
Cast out beyond the bounds of light and love.

Long have I stood, as ye, my sons, well know,
Between the cherubim, and stretched my arms
Of mercy out, inviting all to come
To me, and live; my bowels long have moved
With great compassion; and my justice passed
Transgression by, and not imputed sin.
Long here, upon my everlasting throne,
I have beheld my love and mercy scorned;
Have seen my laws despised, my name blasphemed,
My providence accused, my gracious plans
Opposed; and long, too long, have I beheld
The wicked triumph, and my saints reproached,
Maliciously, while on my altars lie,
Unanswered still, their prayers and their tears,
That seek my coming, wearied with delay;
And long Disorder in my moral reign
Has walked rebelliously, disturbed the peace
Of my eternal government, and wrought
Confusion, spreading far and wide, among
My works inferior, which groan to be
Released: nor long shall groan. The hour of grace,
The final hour of grace, is fully past;
The time accepted for repentance, faith,
And pardon, is irrevocably past;
And Justice, unaccompanied as wont
With Mercy, now goes forth, to give to all
According to their deeds. Justice alone,
For why should mercy any more be joined?
What hath not mercy, mixed with judgment, done,
That mercy, mixed with judgment, and reproof,

Could do? Did I not revelation make,
Plainly and clearly, of my will entire?
Before them set my holy law, and gave
Them knowledge, wisdom, prowess to obey,
And win, by self-wrought works, eternal life?
Rebelled, did I not send them terms of peace,
Which, not my justice, but my mercy asked?
Terms costly to my well-belovèd Son:
To them gratuitous, exacting faith
Alone for pardon, works evincing faith?
Have I not early risen, and sent my seers,
Prophets, apostles, teachers, ministers,
With signs and wonders, working in my name?
Have I not still, from age to age, raised up,
As I saw needful, great religious men,
Gifted by me with large capacity,
And by my arm omnipotent upheld,
To pour the numbers of my mercy forth,
And roll my judgments on the ear of man?
And lastly, when the promised hour was come—
What more could most abundant mercy do?—
Did I not send Immanuel forth, my Son,
Only begotten, to purchase by His blood
As many as believed upon His name?
Did He not die to give repentance, such
As I accept, and pardon of all sins?
Has He not taught, beseeched, and shed abroad
The Spirit unconfined, and given at times
Example fierce of wrath and judgment, poured
Vindictively on nations guilty long?
What means of reformation, that my Son
Has left behind, untried? what plainer words,
What arguments more strong, as yet remain?
Did He not tell them with His lips of truth,

The righteous should be saved, the wicked damned?
And has He not, awake both day and night,
Here interceded, with prevailing voice,
At my right hand pleading His precious blood
Which magnified my holy law, and bought,
For all who wished, perpetual righteousness?
And have not you, my faithful servants, all
Been frequent forth, obedient to my will,
With messages of mercy and of love,
Administering my gifts to sinful man?
And have not all my mercy, all my love,
Been sealed and stamped with signature of Heaven?
By proof of wonders, miracles, and signs
Attested, and attested more by truth
Divine, inherent in the tidings sent?
This day declares the consequence of all.
Some have believed, are sanctified and saved,
Prepared for dwelling in this holy place,
In these their mansions, built before my face;
And now beneath a crown of golden light,
Beyond our wall, at place of judgment, they,
Expecting, wait the promised due reward.
The others stand with Satan bound in chains—
The others, who refused to be redeemed;
They stand unsanctified, unpardoned, sad,
Waiting the sentence that shall fix their woe.
The others, who refused to be redeemed;
For all had grace sufficient to believe,
All who my gospel heard; and none who heard
It not, shall by its law this day be tried.
Necessity of sinning, my decrees
Imposed on none; but rather, all inclined
To holiness; and grace was bountiful,
Abundant, overflowing with my word;

My word of life and peace, which to all men
Who shall or stand or fall, by law revealed,
Was offered freely, as 'twas freely sent,
Without all money, and without all price.
Thus they have all, by willing act, despised
Me, and my Son, and sanctifying Spirit.
But now, no longer shall they mock or scorn;
The day of grace and mercy is complete,
And Godhead from their misery absolved.

So saying, He, the Father infinite,
Turning, addressed Messiah, where He sat,
Exalted gloriously, at His right hand:—
This day belongs to justice, and to Thee,
Eternal Son, thy right for service done,
Abundantly fulfilling all my will;
By promise thine, from all eternity,
Made in the ancient covenant of Grace;
And thine as most befitting, since in Thee
Divine and human meet, impartial Judge,
Consulting thus the interest of both.
Go then, my Son, divine similitude,
Image express of Deity unseen;
The book of my remembrance take; and take
The golden crowns of life, due to the saints;
And take the seven last thunders ruinous;
Thy armour take; gird on thy sword—thy sword
Of justice ultimate, reserved till now,
Unsheathed, in the eternal armoury;
And mount the living chariot of God.
Thou goest not now, as once, to Calvary,
To be insulted, buffeted, and slain;
Thou goest not now with battle, and the voice
Of war, as once against the rebel hosts:

Thou goest a Judge, and findst the guilty bound ;
Thou goest to prove, condemn, acquit, reward :
Not unaccompanied ; all these, my saints,
Go with Thee, glorious retinue, to sing
Thy triumph, and participate thy joy ;
And I, the Omnipresent, with Thee go,
And with Thee all the glory of my throne.

Thus said the Father ; and the Son beloved,
Omnipotent, Omniscient, Fellow-God,
Arose, resplendent with Divinity :
And He the book of God's remembrance took ;
And took the seven last thunders ruinous ;
And took the crowns of life, due to the saints ;
His armour took ; girt on His sword—His sword
Of justice ultimate, reserved till now,
Unsheathed, in the eternal armoury ;
And up the living chariot of God
Ascended, signifying all complete.

And now the trump of wondrous melody,
By man or angel never heard before,
Sounded with thunder, and the march began :
Not swift, as cavalcade on battle bent,
But, as became procession of a judge,
Solemn, magnificent, majestic, slow ;
Moving sublime with glory infinite,
And numbers infinite, and awful song,
They passed the gate of heaven, which many a league
Opened either way to let the glory forth
Of this great march. And now the sons of men
Beheld their coming, which, before, they heard :
Beheld the glorious countenance of God !
All light was swallowed up, all objects seen,

Faded ; and the Incarnate, visible
Alone, held every eye upon Him fixed !
The wicked saw His majesty severe,
And those who pierced Him, saw His face with clouds
Of glory circled round, essential bright !
And to the rocks and mountains called in vain,
To hide them from the fierceness of His wrath ;
Almighty power their flight restrained, and held
Them bound immovable before the bar.

The righteous, undismayed and bold—best proof,
This day, of fortitude sincere—sustained
By inward faith, with acclamations loud
Received the coming of the Son of Man ;
And, drawn by love, inclined to His approach,
Moving to meet the brightness of His face.

Meantime, 'tween good and bad, the Judge His wheels
Stayed, and, ascending, sat upon the great
White throne, that morning founded there by power
Omnipotent, and built on righteousness
And truth. Behind, before, on every side,
In native and reflected blaze of bright
Celestial equipage, the myriads stood,
That with His marching came ; rank above rank,
Rank above rank, with shield and flaming sword.

'Twas silence all ! and quick, on right and left,
A mighty angel spread the Book of God's
Remembrance ; and, with conscience now sincere,
All men compared the record written there
By finger of Omniscience, and received
Their sentence in themselves, of joy or woe ;
Condemned or justified, while yet the Judge

Waited, as if to let them prove themselves.
The righteous, in the Book of Life displayed,
Rejoicing, read their names ; rejoicing read
Their faith for righteousness received, and deeds
Of holiness, as proof of faith complete.
The wicked, in the Book of endless Death,
Spread out to left, bewailing read their names ;
And read beneath them, Unbelief, and fruit
Of unbelief, vile, unrepented deeds,
Now unrepentable for evermore ;
And gave approval of the woe affixed.

This done, the omnipotent, omniscient Judge
Rose infinite, the sentence to pronounce,
The sentence of eternal woe or bliss !
All glory heretofore seen or conceived,
All majesty, annihilated, dropped
That moment from remembrance, and was lost ;
And silence, deepest hitherto esteemed,
Seemed noisy to the stillness of this hour.
Comparisons I seek not, nor should find,
If sought. That silence, which all being held,
When God's almighty Son from off the walls
Of heaven the rebel angels threw, accursed—
So still, that all creation heard their fall
Distinctly, in the lake of burning fire—
Was now forgotten, and every silence else.
All being rational created, then
Around the judgment-seat, intensely listened.
No creature breathed. Man, angel, devil, stood
And listened : the spheres stood still, and every star
Stood still and listened ; and every particle,
Remotest in the womb of matter, stood,
Bending to hear, devotional and still.

And thus upon the wicked, first, the Judge
Pronounced the sentence, written before of old :
“ Depart from me, ye cursed, into the fire,
Prepared eternal in the gulf of hell,
Where ye shall weep and wail for evermore,
Reaping the harvest which your sins have sown.”

So saying, God grew dark with utter wrath ;
And drawing now the sword, undrawn before,
Which through the rage of infinite all round,
A gleam of fiery indignation threw,
He lifted up His hand omnipotent,
And down among the damned the burning edge
Plunged ; and from forth His arrowy quiver sent,
Emptied, the seven last thunders ruinous,
Which, entering, withered all their souls with fire.
Then first was vengeance, first was ruin seen !
Red, unrestrained, vindictive, final, fierce !
They, howling, fled to west among the dark ;
But fled not there the terrors of the Lord.
Pursued, and driven beyond the gulf which frowns,
Impassable, between the good and bad,
And downward, far remote to left, oppressed
And scorched with the avenging fires, begun
Burning within them,—they upon the verge
Of Erebus a moment pausing stood,
And saw, below, the unfathomable lake,
Tossing with tides of dark tempestuous wrath.
And would have looked behind ; but greater wrath,
Behind, forbade, which now no respite gave
To final misery. God, in the grasp
Of His almighty strength, took them upraised,
And threw them down into the yawning pit
Of bottomless perdition, ruined, damned,

Fast bound in chains of darkness evermore ;
And Second Death, and the Undying Worm,
Opening their horrid jaws with hideous yell,
Falling, received their everlasting prey.
A groan returned, as down they sank, and sank,
And ever sank, among the utter dark ;
A groan returned ! the righteous heard the groan,
The groan of all the reprobate, when first
They felt damnation sure, and heard hell close,
And heard Jehovah and His love retire ;
A groan returned ! the righteous heard the groan,
As if all misery, all sorrow, grief,
All pain, all anguish, all despair, which all
Have suffered, or shall feel, from first to last
Eternity, had gathered to one pang,
And issued in one groan of boundless woe !

And now the wall of hell, the outer wall,
First gateless then, closed round them : that which thou
Hast seen, of fiery adamant, emblazed
With hideous imagery, above all hope,
Above all flight of fancy, burning high ;
And guarded evermore by Justice, turned
To Wrath, that hears, unmoved, the endless groan
Of those wasting within ; and sees, unmoved,
The endless tear of vain repentance fall.

Nor ask if these shall ever be redeemed.
They never shall ! Not God, but their own sin
Condemns them. What could be done, as thou hast
heard,
Has been already done ; all has been tried,
That wisdom infinite and boundless grace,
Working together, could devise ; and all



*“Down they sank, and sank,
And ever sank among the utter dark.”*

Has failed. Why now succeed? Though God should stoop,
Inviting still, and send His only Son
To offer grace in hell, the pride that first
Refused would still refuse; the unbelief,
Still unbelieving, would deride and mock;
Nay, more refuse, deride, and mock: for sin,
Increasing still, and growing day and night
Into the essence of the soul, become
All sin, makes what in time seemed probable—
Seemed probable, since God invited then—
For ever now impossible. Thus they—
According to the eternal laws which bind
All creatures, bind the Uncreated One,
Though we name not the sentence of the Judge—
Must daily grow in sin and punishment,
Made by themselves their necessary lot,
Unchangeable to all eternity.

What lot, what choice, I sing not, cannot sing.
Here highest seraphs tremble on the lyre,
And make a sudden pause—but thou hast seen.
And here the bard a moment held his hand,
As one who saw more of that horrid woe
Than words could utter; and again resumed.

Nor yet had vengeance done. The guilty earth,
Inanimate, debased and stained by sin,
Seat of rebellion, of corruption, long,
And tainted with mortality throughout,—
God sentenced next; and sent the final fires
Of ruin forth, to burn and to destroy.
The saints its burning saw, and thou mayst see.
Look yonder round the lofty golden walls

And galleries of New Jerusalem,
Among the imagery of wonders past ;
Look near the southern gate ; look, and behold,
On spacious canvass, touched with living hues,
The conflagration of the ancient earth !
The handiwork of high archangel, drawn
From memory of what he saw that day.
See how the mountains, how the valleys burn ;
The Andes burn, the Alps, the Apennines,
Taurus and Atlas ; all the islands burn ;
The Ocean burns, and rolls his waves of flame.
See how the lightnings, barbèd, red with wrath,
Sent from the quiver of Omnipotence,
Cross and recross the fiery gloom, and burn
Into the centre !—burn without, within,
And help the native fires, which God awoke,
And kindled with the fury of His wrath.
As inly troubled, now she seems to shake !
The flames, dividing, now a moment fall ;
And now in one conglomerated mass,
Rising, they glow on high—prodigious blaze !
Then fall and sink again, as if within,
The fuel, burned to ashes, was consumed.
So burned the earth upon that dreadful day,
Yet not to full annihilation burned.
The essential particles of dust remained,
Purged, by the final sanctifying fires,
From all corruption ; from all stain of sin,
Done there by man or devil, purified.
The essential particles remained, of which
God built the world again, renewed, improved,
With fertile vale, and wood of fertile bough ;
And streams of milk and honey, flowing song ;
And mountains cinctured with perpetual green ;

In clime and season fruitful, as at first,
When Adam woke, unfallen, in Paradise.
And God, from out the fount of native light,
A handful took of beams, and clad the sun
Again in glory; and sent forth the moon
To borrow thence her wonted rays, and lead
Her stars, the virgin daughters of the sky.
And God revived the winds, revived the tides;
And touching her from His almighty hand
With force centrifugal, she onward ran,
Coursing her wonted path, to stop no more.
Delightful scene of new inhabitants!
As thou this morn, in passing hither, sawst.

This done, the glorious Judge, turning to right,
With countenance of love unspeakable,
Beheld the righteous, and approved them thus:
“Ye blessèd of my Father, come, ye just,
Enter the joy eternal of your Lord;
Receive your crowns, ascend, and sit with me,
At God’s right hand, in glory evermore!”

Thus said the Omnipotent, Incarnate God;
And waited not the homage of the crowns,
Already thrown before Him, nor the loud
Amen of universal holy praise;
But turned the living chariot of fire,
And swifter now—as joyful to declare
This day’s proceedings in His Father’s court,
And to present the number of His sons
Before the throne—ascended up to heaven.
And all His saints, and all His angel bands,
As glorious they on high ascended, sang,
Glory to God and to the Lamb!—they sang,

Messiah, fairer than the sons of men,
And altogether lovely. Grace is poured
Into thy lips, above all measure poured ;
And therefore God hath blessed Thee evermore.
Gird, gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Thou
Most mighty ! with thy glory ride ; with all
Thy majesty ride prosperously, because
Of meekness, truth, and righteousness. Thy throne,
O God ! for ever and for ever stands ;
The sceptre of thy kingdom still is right ;
Therefore hath God, thy God, anointed Thee
With oil of gladness and perfumes of myrrh,
Out of the ivory palaces, above
Thy fellows, crowned the Prince of endless Peace !

Thus sang they God, their Saviour : and themselves
Prepared complete to enter now with Christ,
Their living Head, into the Holy Place.
Behold ! the daughter of the King, the Bride,
All glorious within, the Bride adorned,
Comely in broidery of gold ! behold
She comes, apparelled royally, in robes
Of perfect righteousness, fair as the sun,
With all her virgins, her companions fair,
Into the Palace of the King she comes ;
She comes to dwell for evermore ! awake,
Eternal harps ! awake, awake, and sing !—
The Lord, the Lord, our God Almighty, reigns !

Thus the Messiah, with the hosts of bliss,
Entered the gates of heaven, unquestioned now,
Which closed behind them, to go out no more ;
And stood, accepted, in His Father's sight,
Before the glorious everlasting throne,

Presenting all His saints ; not one was lost,
Of all that He in covenant received :
And, having given the kingdom up, He sat,
Where now He sits and reigns, on the right hand
Of glory ; and our God is all in all !

Thus have I sung beyond thy first request,
Rolling my numbers o'er the track of man,
The world at dawn, at mid-day, and decline :
Time gone, the righteous saved, the wicked damned,
And God's eternal government approved.

THE END.





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